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SLANG IN PLAUTUS AND PETRONIUS : LANGUAGE USAGE AND SOCIAL STATUS

By Kathryn S. Bennett, Lake Erie College

The subject of slang in Plautus and Petronius is a complex one which may be approached from several angles. In a previous paper¹ I compared Latin and American slang on the basis of the analysis of American slang made by Sechrist in his article entitled "The Psychology of Unconventional Language."² In that paper it was shown that Latin slang parallels American in all its essential characteristics, including the source and reason of invention, the types of expression, the general use and effect, and the subject-matter content. For example, we see its concrete picturesqueness in Petronius' use of valde succosi ("very juicy")³ to refer to the rich, and the coinage of words for humorous effect in Plautus' Trinummus, where the Sycophant orders the unwelcome Charmides: ut charmidatu's rursum te recharmida ("Just as you made yourself Charmides, uncharmidge yourself").⁴

The purpose of this paper is to consider in particular the relationship of language usage, including slang, to the social status of the user. To supplement Sechrist's article, we shall take a current analysis of the American situation as a basis of comparison with the Roman, i. e., the recent book Society and Education.⁵

The authors describe American society as made up of social groups interrelated in various ways and ranked more or less informally as high, middle, and lower class on the basis of economic power and social prestige. American society also has "social mobility," which means that individuals may move from one class to another. One of the main indices of a person's class status has been found to be the amount of his education and education is particularly important because moving into another class means learning the culture of that class. Along with the necessary vocational and social skills, skills connected with language usage are very important, skills which enable one to use the appropriate vocabulary and intonations of speech and to discuss appropriate topics.

Where does slang fit into this picture? In the first place, slang is a social phenomenon requiring a sympathetic audience as well as an initiator. People enjoy breaking away from convention occasionally, but fear of social disapproval acts as a restraint except when people are in intimate groups, such as are found in the family, in school, in sports, and in trades. We are all familiar with the slang of college students and baseball fans. Recently a newspaper columnist, Sylvia Porter,⁶ commented on the "Ad-ese"

of New York's Madison Avenue and the "bafflegab" of economists who speak of current business levels as "peaking off." The jargon of professional groups is a sort of high-class slang.

But the social group with the least concern for social approval and the least adequate conventional vocabulary is the lower class. Slang flourishes at this level as a temporary means for attracting attention and admiration and for adding humor and variety to otherwise limited speech. However, the repetition of slang phrases without the relief of more conventional communication becomes tiring and boring, and the person who can converse only in slang clichés is not socially acceptable in a group with greater mastery of language. An attempt to appear more learned usually results in the "pretentious illiteracy" recently criticized by Henry George Strauss in a speech before the Authors' Club of London.⁷ He pointed out as being affected the use of long words for short, such as "underprivileged" for "poor" and "assignment" for "job," and also the coining of such words as "hospitalize."

Now let us turn to the Roman scene. Scholars have noted that the constant users of slang are represented as members of the lower class -- slaves, freedmen, parasites, and tradesmen. Duff uses this fact as a means of distinguishing plebeian elements in the Latin language.⁸ We can sense also a kind of "pretentious illiteracy" in the characters of Plautus who relish long words, compounds, and alliteration. For example, the slave Tranio in the Mostellaria soliloquizes as follows:

Ego dabo ei talentum, primus qui in crucem excucurrerit;
sed ea lege, ut offigantur bis pedes, bis brachia.
Ubi id erit factum, a me argentum petito praesentarium.
Sed ego sumne infelix, qui non curro curriculo domum?

I will give a thousand dollars to him who rushes to my cross ahead of me; but on the condition that he be bound twice, hand and foot. Then let him seek ready cash from me. But am I not out of luck who don't run my race home?⁹

As might be expected, the richest source of Latin slang expressions is the account of Trimalchio's dinner by Petronius,¹⁰ where thirty different such expressions occur within nine hundred lines of text. This agrees with the American pattern, since Petronius is describing a group of congenial lower-class freedmen and tradesmen relaxing under the influence of good food and drink. A few examples will suffice to show the picturesque metaphors drawn from their occupations and sports:

manum de tabula, "take one's hand from the table," i.e., "cease from business";¹¹ per scutum per ocream, "by shield

and by greave, "i. e., "by hook or crook"; ¹² quadrigae meae decurrerunt, "my four-horse chariots have departed," i. e., "I have the gout"; ¹³ clavo tabulari fixum, "fixed with a ten-inch nail," i. e., "fixed for good"; ¹⁴ habet haec res panem, "this thing has bread in it," i. e., "is a good source of income."¹⁵

It is interesting to note that the members of this group are aware that their language marks their social status and that they resent the presence of critical outsiders. One of these humbler guests complains to the schoolmaster Agamemnon, who has not joined in the conversation:

Videris mihi, Agamemnon, dicere: "quid iste argutat molestus?" Quia tu, qui potes loquere, non loquis. Non es nostrae fasciae, et ideo pauperorum verba derides. Scimus te prae litteras fatuum esse.

You seem to me, Agamemnon, to be saying: "What is that pest arguing about?", because you who can speak, don't speak. You are not of our band, and so you make fun of the words of poor men; but we know that except for letters you are a fool.¹⁶

Yet the same speaker goes on to admit his grudging recognition of the importance of education. He says that he lectures his son daily thus (46, 8):

Primigeni, crede mihi, quicquid discis, tibi discis. Vides Phileronem causidicum: si non didicisset, hodie famem a labris non abigeret. Modo, modo collo suo circumferebat onera venalia.

Believe me, my firstborn, what you learn, you learn for yourself. You see Philero, the lawyer: if he had not learned, he wouldn't be keeping starvation from his lips. Now, now he surrounds his neck with jewelry.¹⁷

This last quotation reveals the desire of a father to have his son rise in the world and move into a higher social class marked by education and wealth. In Trimalchio himself we have the example of a man trying to do just that. Certainly he has acquired enormous wealth, but somehow his lavish display of it has not won his acceptance into the coveted higher circles. Even Trimalchio senses that what he lacks is education, and he tries desperately to give the impression of being a learned man. For example, he invites the schoolmaster Agamemnon to dinner, and in a conversation with him claims that he has considerable acquaintance with letters and owns three libraries, one Greek and two Latin.¹⁸ He asks Agamemnon what sub-

ject had been debated that day, and when Agamemnon says: "The poor and the rich are enemies," Trimalchio replies with a philosophical air: *Quid est pauper?* ("What is poor?"). Whereupon Agamemnon gives the longed-for comment: "Urbane" ("Spoken like a gentleman").¹⁹ However, as Trimalchio proceeds to air his "learning," his obvious lack of it makes his aspiration to high society ridiculous and impossible. A good example is his description of his jars and cups showing, he says, how Cassandra killed her sons and how Daedalus shut up Niobe in the Trojan horse.²⁰

But Trimalchio and his guests as well as the characters in Plautus' Comedies are fictional. Is there historical evidence that confirms their testimony? Sallust gives us a vivid picture of the able and ambitious Marius lashing out at the social class into which he could not break. As a plebeian consul he defends himself against the scorn of the patrician nobles by matching his own actions and valor against their elegant speech.²¹ His references to their "elegant and artful language" and to their condemnation of his own speech as "inelegant" show that he recognized language usage as an essential element in social status, much as he despised it.

Catullus picks out for ridicule a social climber named Arrius. His "pretentious illiteracy" took the form of misplacing aspirates cockneywise. The chommoda, hinsidias, and Hionios fluctus of Arrius mark him as definitely lower class, and Catullus remarks that his free uncle and other relatives probably spoke the same way.

So far, the evidence has pointed to the fact that the lack of mastery of an accepted standard in language proved an obstacle to the acceptance of the uneducated into the upper class, even when they were wealthy and powerful. Did education enable anyone to rise from low degree and become an accepted member of the upper class? An excellent example is that of Terence, the ex-slave, who became an honored member of the Scipionic circle. Another is Horace, son of a freedman father, who became the close personal friend of Maecenas and a member of the inner circle of Augustus. Horace specifically gives the credit for his rise to his father who, though a poor man on a small farm, was unwilling to send him to the local school of Flavius, and dared to take him as a boy to Rome to be taught those arts which any knight or senator would teach his sons.²²

To what conclusions has our brief investigation brought us? Certainly that social groupings in Rome were distinguished by characteristics of language, with slang a recognized mark of the lower class; that it was difficult to move from one group to another unless the language usage of the superior group was acquired; that the most effective means for achieving acceptance into the upper class was a liberal education with its accompanying mastery of the language of that class.

If it is our desire in America to eliminate class barriers in so far as this is possible, what more potent tool do we have than teaching skill in the use of language?

NOTES

1. K. S. Bennett, "Slang, Latin vs. American," Classical Journal, XXXI, 1, October, 1935, 35-41.
2. F. K. Sechrist, "The Psychology of Unconventional Language," The Pedagogical Seminary, XX, 1913, 415-456.
3. Petronius, S., 38, 7.
4. Plautus, Trinummus, 976-977.
5. R. J. Havighurst, B. L. Neugarten, Society and Education (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1957).
6. The Cleveland Plain Dealer, March 15, 1957.
7. Time, LXIX, 7, February 18, 1957, 63.
8. J. W. Duff, A Literary History of Rome, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), 26-28.
9. Plautus, Mostellaria, 359-362.
10. Petronius, S., 28-78.
11. Ibid., 76, 9.
12. Ibid., 61, 9.
13. Ibid., 64, 3.
14. Ibid., 75, 8.
15. Ibid., 46, 7.
16. Ibid., 46, 1-2.
17. Ibid., 46, 8.
18. Ibid., 48, 4.
19. Ibid., 48, 5.
20. Ibid., 52, 2-3.
21. Sallust, Jugurthine War, LXXXV, 324.
22. Horace, Sermones, I, 6, 71-77.

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THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX IN TRISTAN ET ISEUT

By Gerald A. Bertin, Rutgers University

Can a Freudian interpretation of the Oedipus complex in Tristan et Iseut explain for us some of the puzzling questions which arise in this legend? Why does the dying hero seek the loneliness of an unmanned ship on the vast deep? What is the power of the beautiful golden-haired maiden to cure the ills of his festering body? What is the meaning of the strange love triangle involving Tristan, Iseut, and Mark? It seemed to me, when I began this study, that a psychoanalytic interpretation might be especially valid when applied to a work like Tristan et Iseut, which has had such universal appeal that its principal features have remained constant throughout many centuries in numerous versions and in many languages. Since I am only an amateur psychoanalyst, I have sought guidance in some of the basic books and especially in several illuminating conversations with Dr. Benedict J. Bernstein, member of the American Psychiatric Association and of the New York Psychoanalytic Society.

To the best of my knowledge, the subject of the present talk has not been treated by a student of literature, and Dr. Bernstein has not found more than passing mention while checking psychoanalytic literature for me. In any event, I am offering here only a tentative first step in a type of literary investigation which is new to me but which seems to offer a powerful tool for the interpretation of a good many forms of artistic production and which perhaps can add a new dimension to our understanding.

What is the theoretical basis of our discussion? To the analyst of Freudian orientation the Oedipus complex is universally encountered in all individuals and in all cultures of which we have knowledge. The Oedipus complex represents a double attitude toward one's parents: the desire for an incestuous relationship with one parent and the wish to eliminate the other. For a boy, the Oedipus complex normally expresses the desire for an incestuous relationship with the mother and is coupled with hostility toward the father. This is a real love affair; strong feelings are involved; hate, jealousy, and love create a tempest of passion within the boy. There is also terror, for he fears loss of love as well as possible retaliation from the powerful father or from the dominant phallic mother. His greatest cause for anxiety is the threat of castration, a punishment which he in turn would like to inflict upon his father. In an effort to escape from this subconscious fear, the child frequently denies his true relationship by means of the "family romance," a fantasy in which he depicts himself as a stepchild or an adopted child and of higher or nobler birth than these so-called parents. The intense oedipal conflict is normally resolved at the age of six or seven with the advent of the

"latency period" when the oedipal wishes are in part abandoned and in part repressed into the unconscious, and the male child successfully identifies with the father.

How is this theoretical pattern applied to the interpretation of literature? According to psychoanalytic theory these repressed wishes may be symbolically revealed throughout the lifetime of any of us, in dreams and in artistic creations as well as in the course of psychoanalytic therapy. The artist touches "lost chords" on several levels of our unconscious as well as of our conscious awareness; his hidden self draws a response from our hidden selves. With regard to Oedipus, for example, Freud felt that "...as the poet brings the guilt of Oedipus to light by his investigation, he forces us to become aware of our own inner selves, in which the same impulses are still extant, even though they are suppressed."¹ The suppressed impulses find their way to reality in artistic creations by symbolic means so that their "origin in prohibited sources is disguised."² The symbol in this sense is defined by Mullahy as "a pictorial substitute for something covert ... a condensation of two or more meanings, an amalgamation,"³ and he explains its function as follows: "...the more fully a symbol expresses a profoundly repressed, an anxiety-provoking tendency, the more carefully is its significance, in terms of unconscious wish and desire, hidden and uncomprehended."⁴ A fundamental mechanism of this disguise--observed especially in dreams and in myths--is the duplication or multiplication of the parental image, so that giants, monsters, wolves, dragons, tyrants, and policemen may receive the hostility which the artist (or the hero, the child, the auditor, the reader) expresses against the "hated aspect of the father image."⁵ With reference to the mother, and particularly relevant to the interpretation of the role of Iseut, Mullahy remarks that "... the most frequent occurrence / of the Oedipus complex / portrays a situation where not the mother but another figure such as a stepmother, the wife of the ruler, or some other figure appears."⁶

Let us now examine briefly and in roughly chronological order some of the manifestations of the Oedipus complex in the legend of Tristan et Iseut. In general, Bédier's popular adaptation furnishes adequate evidence, but additional material is occasionally taken from Bédier's table of concordances, his edition of Thomas, Muret's edition of Béroul, and Loomis's adaptation of Thomas; Mary's adaptation was also consulted.⁷

The ill-fated hero is destined to sorrow. Trist-hum, as Thomas explains, is conceived while his father lies dying; shortly afterward his mother dies in the agony of his birth. The poem expresses here the attempt to escape from the turmoil and pain of the oedipal situation. The wished-for death of the father is realized, but at the same time the death of the mother is necessary to thwart the orphan's incestuous wishes toward her. Our hero starts life sorrowfully indeed, for he is burdened with hostility

toward his parents and feelings of guilt toward himself.

The "family romance" is prepared when Roald the Faithful disguises Tristan as a child born to his own wife. Raised among "the women"--in a perfect milieu to gather rich clues about his identity--the "adored one" becomes a young prince, nobler than his parents. At the age of seven, which marks also the advent of the latency period, the noble boy is entrusted to a benevolent master, Gorvenal, so that he may assume a masculine role in life. The highborn prince later wins all laurels in battle and demonstrates superb skill in the arts, yet he often lies about his identity and frequently assumes disguises which place him in a lower rank as a merchant, a jongleur, a fool, or even a leper. These lies and disguises indicate that he seeks subconsciously to divert from his true self the penalties for his hostile and incestuous wishes, while at the same time he metes out his own punishment by taking the form of a leper. The painful and constant pursuit of an identity is the price that must be paid for the "family romance" fantasy.

To a certain degree Tristan's quest is successful, for while still a youth he is kidnaped and taken across the sea by Norwegian merchants, thereby beginning the journey back to his parents. Passage over the sea is symbolically related, according to the interpretation of dreams, to closeness with the mother; the storm and the turbulence of the waters, which force the merchants to free him, reenact the scene of his birth and result in his rescue by the mother. Gaston Paris used an appropriate phrase, although certainly with no intention of Freudian interpretation, when he termed the sea "un acteur passionné."

Mark, on the other hand, symbolizes one of the many paternal images. Unaware at first of his avuncular ties to Tristan, the king reinforces the "family romance" fantasy by accepting the unknown talented youth with deep affection, and throughout the subsequent vicissitudes, even though the king sometimes plays the role of the pitiless avenger, he usually portrays the benevolent and forgiving father. We find a curious and revealing interpretation of this paternal relationship in Bédier's adaptation of the scene where Tristan at night brings his uncle the note offering to return Iseut to the court. Bédier indicates that his source for this scene is Béroul, with slight modifications drawn from Eilhart von Oberg. According to Béroul, the compassionate king calls out three times: "Por Deu, beaus niés, ton oncle atent!"⁸ According to Eilhart, Mark says merely: "Wait! I want to speak to you!"⁹ But Bédier uses the line from Béroul: "Pour l'amour de Dieu, beau neveu, attends-moi!" and then the French scholar adds words of his own invention: "Il s'élança sur le seuil, et, par trois fois, cria dans la nuit: 'Tristan! Tristan! Tristan, mon fil!' " ¹⁰

Other father images are less beloved by Tristan and suffer from his oedipal aggression, which has its source in the unconscious wish to destroy, or at least to castrate, the most formidable rival, the father. In Eilhart's version of the battle with the Morholt, Tristan graphically slashes off the Morholt's wrist and then returns from the island bearing triumphantly aloft two glinting swords. In the poem of Thomas, Moldagog the giant suffers a similar fate: "Tristram's sword slanted down upon his leg with so sharp a stroke that his foot fell far from him."¹¹ Incidentally, if the giant guarding the cave becomes the castrated father, the cave itself symbolizes a tremendous oedipal attachment to the mother. A third father image that comes to an unfortunate end is the dragon. After slaying this terrible creature, Tristan cuts off its tongue "to the roots,"¹² takes it for himself and hides it in his hose. Significantly the amputated tongue of the dragon serves as proof of his victory and wins for him the maiden Iseut.

However, the abominable, though disguised, crime of father murder is sometimes punished. After the deaths of the Morholt and of the dragon, Tristan shows no conscious feelings of guilt, but his desire for self-punishment takes the visible form of festering wounds. After the victory over the Morholt, Tristan regresses before the act of patricide and orders his tormented body with its unbearable stench to be consigned to the sea, to the mother and her promise of death and rebirth--the familiar idea of return to the womb. Indeed, in both of these incidents Tristan is brought to Iseut, the magic mother who cures him.

After his wounds are cured by Iseut, Tristan returns to Mark's court but soon discovers that the envious barons Andret, Guenelon, Gondofne, and Denoalen resent the unnatural favor he enjoys with the king. For Mark, while still in the prime of life, has promised never to marry and employs every ruse to avoid marriage in order to leave his kingdom to his nephew. The jealous barons--jealous siblings in rivalry for the love of the father--accuse Tristan of having bewitched the king and force Mark to consent to take a wife. The nephew also feels himself threatened by a homosexual relationship (resulting from that aspect of the Oedipus complex in which the son identifies with the mother and wishes to assume her role in relation to the father). In order to assert his own masculinity and to direct his uncle toward a heterosexual relationship, Tristan himself volunteers to seek la belle aux cheveux d'or.

While the ship bearing Iseut back to Mark crosses the sea and the young hero is in a doubly symbolic intimacy with the mother, the fated couple take the potion of death, the Love-drink. The punishment and death which eventually follow are the retribution for incestuous love. The potion itself might well symbolize the milk that the adoring infant drinks at the breast and, secondarily, the intimate and eternal pact formed between mother and child during the nursing process. Yet the oral attachment to the mother begins

to be resolved at the age of three, so that the time limit of three years for the potency of the philter as set in the Béroutl-Eilhart versions may be explained by the unconscious repression of the memory of this love.

During a long separation from Iseut, la belle aux cheveux d'or, Tristan comes to Brittany and there marries another Iseut, aux blanches mains. As is dramatically indicated by the identity of names, she, too, represents the symbolic mother, but in this case the hero shrinks from incest, and their union produces a psychic impotence which leaves the marriage unconsummated.

Death comes to Tristan, in the poem of Thomas, when the hero aids Tristan the Dwarf--himself as a child reappearing--who has lost his love to Estult the proud. The combined Tristans kill Estult and his six brothers, thereby taking final vengeance on all siblings, but the child Tristan dies immediately. The adult Tristan also dies while awaiting in vain the return of the loving and magic mother, but they are soon united in death. Death represents the return to the mother.

This brief study of the Oedipus complex in Tristan et Iseut has been tentative and exploratory; yet if a Freudian interpretation of the symbols of the "family romance" fantasy, of the father-son hostility, and of incest does seem to cast some light on this legend, then the search for the unconscious motivations offers a rich field for further investigation.

NOTES

1. Abraham Arden Brill, "The Interpretation of Dreams," in The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud, (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), p. 308.
2. Patrick Mullahy, Oedipus, Myth and Complex, (New York: Hermitage Press, 1948), p. 102.
3. Ibid., 85.
4. Ibid., 86.
5. Ibid., 88.
6. Ibid., 107.
7. The Old French texts cited are: Joseph Bédier, Le Roman de Tristan par Thomas, SATF, vol. 45 (in two parts), (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1902, 1905); Ernest Muret, Le Roman de Tristan par Béroutl, SATF, vol. 48 (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1903). Modern adaptations are: Joseph Bédier, Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut (Paris: Piazza, 1934); Roger Sherman Loomis, The Romance of Tristram and Ysolt (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1923); André Mary, Tristan (Paris: Gonin, 1937).

8. Muret, Béroul, 2471.
9. Eilhart von Oberge (Strassburg: herausgegeben von Franz Lichtenstein 1877), 4829.
10. Bédier, Le Roman de Tristan et Iseut, 131.
11. Loomis, p. 213; Bédier, Thomas, I, 304.
12. Bédier, Thomas, I, 117.

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REALISM AND HUMOR IN THE CID

By J. Cary Davis, Southern Illinois University

Artistically, the loss of the first folio of the Cid is perhaps a blessing. How much more realistic is its beginning than that of Homer's Odyssey, "andra moi enepe musa...", or Vergil's Aeneid, "Arma virumque cano...", with their appeal to the Gods and the Muses; less resounding perhaps, but just as effective: "De los sos ojos tan fuertemiente llorando..."

This same quality of realism is to be found throughout the poem, sometimes with ironic overtones or even touches of humor, grim though it may be. The juglar makes clear to his listeners how great is the King's wrath in the proscription brought by the royal messengers to Burgos: that none should lodge or help the Cid under penalty of loss of possessions, of eyes, even of body and soul. And the Cid himself finally admits the full extent of the "disgrace" (literally) into which he has fallen, when he finds the doors of the city shut, and only a nine year old child dares speak to him: "Ya lo vede el Çid que del rey non avie graçia"(50).¹

Yet they must eat and sleep and rest their horses, so the exile (echado de tierra) and his company camp on the gravelly bank of the Arlanzón river. And here the phenomenal luck of the Cid--in the person of his staunch friend, Martín Antolínez, "Ese Burgalés conplido"--comes to the fore. The latter "just happened" to be carrying along enough bread and wine for the group. Although, as the poet is careful to explain, Martín Antolínez kept the letter of the King's command, in not having to buy any food, he knows he will soon be "metido en ira del rey Alffons"(74).

With this highly realistic treatment, the drama of the Poema opens, to be continued throughout in the same down-to-earth vein. Here one is dealing not with mythological giants, beings of supernatural power, but with flesh and blood humans with human courage, weaknesses, loyalties, and prejudices. Many critics have commented on these realistic traits of the Cid, the sobriety of its descriptions and its restraint even in the moments of greatest violence. Still more striking, however, to my mind, is the naturalness of the psychological reactions of the characters, the interplay of their emotions and reasoning.

When Martín Antolínez declares himself ready to follow the Cid, he says, optimistically:

Si convusco escapo sano o bivo
Aun çerca o tarde el rey quer m'a por amigo;

Si non, quanto dexo no lo preçio un figo (75-77).

Naturally he is a little upset about abandoning his estates, but characteristically strives to stifle his doubts with the scornful "no lo preçio un figo."

Exceedingly interesting, in this respect, is the Raquel e Vidas episode, rich in realistic details and subtle overtones of humor. Whatever the moral and social implications--a topic which Seymour Resnick summarizes very well in his excellent article, "Raquel e Vidas and the Cid," in the September, 1956, issue of Hispania--, the fact remains that this section must have been the comic highlight of the Poema for its medieval audiences, eclipsing even the more exciting passages dealing with the mishaps of the Infantes de Carrión.

When Martín Antolínez calls on Raquel e Vidas, he finds them counting their money--or more specifically, their profits. What else would one expect them to be doing? This was the accepted notion of the constant preoccupation of Jewish moneylenders.

The Cid's lieutenant very cleverly appeals at once to their friendship and curiosity: "Please don't let anyone know...." His explanation of the Cid's plight seems to the eager Jews a logical one, but they are shrewd and want to be assured of his ability to repay the loan and know how much interest he will offer. Upon receiving proper assurances, they exclaim as one man: "...Darge los hemos de grado" (136). When Martín Antolínez demands the six hundred marks at once, Raquel e Vidas say, "Non se faze assí el mercado/ sinon primero prendiendo e después dando" (139-140).

It may be true that the use of the singular verb form preceding several subjects is not uncommon, as Menéndez Pidal's note states, but its use here in three places (and elsewhere) gives the effect of treating Raquel e Vidas as a single individual, or as the "Firm." The only other example Menéndez Pidal cites here (that of the Ambassadors from the Kings of Navarre and Aragón, line 3422) bears the same connotation, "as one man" or "in unison." Note the same comic effect in the Cid's greetings to the Jews after they have just kissed his hands, with only one don for the pair: "¡Ya don Raquel e Vidas, avédesme olvidado!" (155) References to the Cid's daughters, on the other hand, are always "Doña Elvira e doña Sol." Again in line 172 we read "Grádanse Raquel e Vidas..." with a plural. I am convinced the single form was deliberate, since it occurs again in line 1431, when the moneylenders demand their money and threaten to seek out the Cid.

Even the Cid's haste to be away before the cock crows is psychologically sound, and the Jews take joy from the very weight of the chests, which they can scarcely lift, strong men though they are. Before they leave, how-

ever, Raquel asks (for himself?) a crimson cloak, a request which the Cid grants (171).

The steps of the actual payment are given in detail: a carpet is spread out, and over it a fine, white sheet. The first golpe of three hundred marks is in silver. Don Marti'n counts them but does not weigh them. The other three hundred marks are in gold. Then Marti'n Antoli'nez seals the pact and removes likewise any lingering doubts the Jews may have had by asking for a commission of calças. They give him the equivalent: thirty marks. Some authorities feel that the use of the number "thirty" here has a direct reference to Judas and his thirty pieces of silver, but it is also one twentieth of the total amount of the loan and not a bad sum for a commission.

The successful trader is welcomed back by the Cid with open arms, and reminds the latter that they must be off if they want to reach the Monastery of San Pedro before the dawn: "En San Pero de Cardeña i nos cante el gallo" (209).

With this auspicious beginning the story is well under way, and the reader feels, as the listeners of another age must have felt, that the Cid's affairs are in good hands, and it hardly needs the assurance of the Angel Gabriel, two hundred lines further on, that "bien se fará lo so" (409).

Here, within a very few verses, the poet has established a reality of situation which is remarkable for its consistency and ready acceptance. With a few deft touches here, a homely detail there, we are absorbed into the narrative as active observers and participants. This has always been the essence of good story-telling, and the trait is here in abundance.

Of the many realistic devices which the poet uses, none is more effective than the dialogue: simple, direct, occasionally formal, but usually racy or full of slang, and never commonplace; sometimes noble, oftentimes pathetic, always dramatic in its intensity.²

There are many instances of prayers--particularly those of doña Ximena, touching in her helpless grief, "que non sabe qué se far" (370), and her grateful thanks to the Virgin when the family is finally reunited in Valencia; the Cid's promises to the Virgin of good gifts for her altar: "Esto he yo en debdo que faga i cantar mill missas" (225).

It is in the little descriptive details, however, brief phrases or single adjectives, that the poet's skill at evocation is most apparent, such as: "Apriessa cantan los gallos e quieren crebar albores" (235); "Con lumbres e con candelas al corral dieron salto" (244); "Tañen las campanas en San Pero a clamor" (286); the sunrise (456-457).

No action is deemed too insignificant, as when the Cid prepares to enter the Moorish kingdom of Toledo: "Temprano dat çevada, sř el Criador vos salue" (420).

Incidentally, this last phrase, which is so widespread in Medieval Romance, appears in several variant forms in the Cid, such as, "Sřn salve Dios" (So help me God), "Sř vos vala el Criador," and the King's own special variation, "Sř me vala Sant Esidre!" As used here, the formula seems much more a direct appeal to deity or saint than the stereotyped French parallels in Chrétien de Troyes: "Si m'aît Deus," and "Se Deus m'aît."

Another source of realism in the Poema is the invariable naming of geographical points in the many journeys back and forth across the Peninsula. We are told how far the parties go each day, where they lodge and eat, care being taken to distinguish between towns of ambiguous names, for example, "El que es sobre Fenares" (435). Most of these points have been identified and can be traced on a map.

There is always a listing of booty: "Sheep, cows, clothing, and other great riches" (481-482). And the horses taken in battle and presented lavishly to King and vassal--hundreds of them, all sumptuously saddled and bridled, some of them corredores, some of them palfreys. In the giving of these presents is seen the generosity of the Cid, as well as his commercial acumen when he sells back to the Moors of Castejón his own fifth of the ganancias for three thousand silver marks (521), and to the Moors of Alcoçer, their city for a like amount (845).

The use of numbers, as Professor Edmund de Chasca has pointed out in his recent book,³ is often unexpectedly exact, certainly less extravagant than in the Roland, for example. Certain round figures (one hundred, six hundred, thirty thousand) are repeated, but not to excess, and occasionally are replaced by very precise numbers: one hundred thirty horses (1695), four thousand minus thirty (1717), and "Non escaparon más de ciento e quatro" (1735). While certain allowances may be made for meter, it seems unlikely that the story teller felt constrained too greatly in his choice of numbers.

Exaggeration does occur, as when the Cid kills so many Moors they are "uncounted" and his arms are streaming blood from the elbows down (1723-1724), but surely some poetic license, if this is such, may be granted for battle description! Here, too, occur the marvellous sword strokes that split a man in half, down to the waist (751, 2420).

The battles themselves are fascinating sequences, fast moving, colorful, with bits of conscious humor: In their flight from Valencia, the Moorish hosts of Seville are forced "to drink water against their will" (1229).

In the rout of King Búcar's forces we see the Spaniards cutting the tent cords and pulling up stakes so that the heavy structures fall upon the Moors as they struggle to escape, but they are pulled forth, feet first. The impersonal use of the singular in "tanto braço con loriga veriedes caer a part" (2404) lends a touch of callous humor to the hectic scene. And then there is the interchange of remarks between Mío Cid and Búcar as the latter is in full flight from the pursuing Champion:

"Acá torna, Búcar! venist dalent mar.
"Veerte as con el Çid, el de la barba grant,
"saludar nos hemos amos, e tajaremos amiztat."

Repuso Búcar al Çid: "cofonda Dios tal amistad!
"Espada tienes en mano e veot aguijar;
"así commo semeja, en mi la quieres ensayar." (2409-2414)

The portrait of the Cid himself is a well-rounded one. The predominant feature of his physical description seems to be his long flowing beard. He is often referred to as "la barba vellida," and it is this beard which astounds and fascinates the audience at the King's Trial Court. As a husband and father, he delights in showing to his reunited family his newly-conquered possessions--"Valencia, how the City lies" (1613)--and rejoices in the chance they will now have to see him fight the Moors. At the end of the battle, he exhibits to them his sweaty horse and bloody sword (1752). He bestows two hundred marks on each daughter as an initial dowry. The fighting warrior is depicted as a wily strategist who disposes his war camp so as to have an unfailing supply of water (554), while he tricks the enemy into attacking an abandoned tent (576 ff.).

As a man, commo es alegre at the receipt of good news, and how joyful at possessing such a fine horse as Babieca: "Allí preçió a Bavioca de la cabeça fasta a cabo" (1732). Toward his friends he is grateful and unfailingly generous. To the Moors, except in battle, he can be merciful, and they weep for his departure: "Quando quitó a Alcoçer //mío Çid el de Bivar, moros e moras//começaron de llorar" (855-856). The Moor Abengalvón is one of his closest friends and allies. The captured Count of Barcelona, who goes on a hunger strike, is persuaded to eat on a promise of going free (1035). As a buen cristiano, the Cid pays for one thousand masses in Santa María de Burgos, he remembers his promises to the Abbot of San Pero de Cardena, and he creates a new Bishop for Valencia. As a loyal subject of King Alfonso, the Cid sends gifts of horses, swords, and other booty to his lord, he humbles himself before the King and refuses to accept special privileges, such as sitting on the sovereign's private bench (which the Cid had given him). When he is at last pardoned, he invites the King to be his guest (2046).

And what of the Cid's vassals--his lieutenants and kinsmen, "los que

comían su pan"? To a man they are staunch supporters and cherished advisers: Pero Vermúdez, Martín Antolínez, Albar Fáñez, Félez Muñoz, Abengalvón, and, of course, the Bishop don Jerome. What a fighter, that one!-- the prototype of the Crusader-Priest, with something of Friar Tuck, who yearned to slay the Heathen and asked the right to strike the first blows in the battle against the Moroccan invaders, but not until he had first chanted mass for the souls of the warriors of the Cid.

Only second in interest to the Cid are the Infantes de Carrión. Typical spoiled brats of a noble family, they serve as the antithesis of all that is brave and manly. They first enter the story in line 1372, where only their overweening pride in family line prevents an outward expression of their desire to marry the Cid's daughters and share in his wealth. Their cupidity finally overcomes their scruples, however, and from then on we follow their spotted career in successive stages: the Cid's reluctant consent to his daughters' marriage; his whole-hearted welcome of his sons-in-law; and their subsequent loss of prestige. The Lion Episode, which is the chief motivation for the "Afrenta de Corpes," begins that cantar very abruptly and furnishes some of the most humorous bits of realism in the poem.

The Cid is lying on a bench when the lion gets loose. His retainers wrap their cloaks around their arms for protection and surround the hero. Ferrando can find no hiding place, and crawls under the bench, while Diego rushes out shouting, "I won't see Carrión again!" and hides behind the wine press. We are told he gets his clothes all dirty. The Cid awakens and cows the lion, leading him meekly back to his cage. The sons-in-law are called but they do not answer. When found, they are sin color. They become the butt of jokes and laughter, upon which the Cid frowns.

With the coming of Búcar's host, everyone except the Infantes is happy. Although invited to stay home, they feel forced to take part in the battle. Pero Vermúdez protects them and gives them credit for his own deeds, while Albar Fáñez reports truthfully that they have had their fill of fighting. The Cid is pleased and shares the booty with his sons-in-law. By now they are claiming full credit even for slaying King Búcar. Naturally the Infantes are the laughing stock of the Cid's household.

Vengeance decided upon, the Infantes and their wives set out for Carrión. When they arrive at Molina, they are given such a royal welcome by the Moor Abengalvón that the rascally princes plan to kill and rob him. News of the plot is brought to the Moor, who gives them a terrific tongue-lashing: "Dezidme, ¿qué vos fiz, ifantes de Carrión?" (2675) and with misgivings sends them on their way.

The assault in the woods, the rescue of the abandoned and maltreated wives by their cousin Félez Muñoz (with his brand new hat!), their return to

Valencia--all these details are too well known to need repeating here.

The trial sequence merits intensive study, with its legal formalities, its accusations and counter-accusations, the boastings of the banda from Carrión, the Infantes' efforts to squirm out of repaying the Cid his money gifts ("We spent it all!" 3202 ff.), the insults of Garci Ordóñez whose unfortunate reference to "beards" brings humiliating retaliation, Pero Vermúdez' slow indictment of the two brothers. He says, "You always call me Pero Mudo, Cid" (3310)--but he is now willing enough to talk: Ferrando he calls "tongue without hands" (3328), and he ends by stating "I'll fight you in behalf of the Cid's daughters. They are women, and you are men, but in every way they are better than you!" (3347-48)

The exchange of insults reaches a peak with the arrival of the loose-tongued Ansuor González, older brother of the Infantes, still flushed with sleep and a heavy breakfast: The Cid of Bivar--Where is that?--let him go pick up his mill gleanings" (3372). He is answered by Muño Gustioz: "Shut up, alevoso, malo, e traidor! You are false to all and most to God!" (3383-87)

The arrival of the Ambassadors from Navarra and Aragón, seeking the Cid's daughters as brides for the rulers of their respective kingdoms, "a muchos plaze... mas non plaze a ifantes de Carrión" (3427). This permits Minaya Albar Fáñez to taunt them: "You had them as wives, now they will be your Majesties!" The court ends on a humorous note when the discomfited Princes protest that "tomorrow" is too soon for the trial by combat... "We've just got to go home first, there's too much to do to get ready!" (3767 ff.)

The judicial battle is itself an excellent description filled with realistic and humorous details but too important to treat adequately in a few words. Scattered throughout the Poema, there are hundreds of minute references to customs, such as the high boot (huesa) filled with coins (821), or the blessing of the saddles of the Cid's champions (3583), the shoeing of the travellers' horses as part of Moorish hospitality (1553)--but we can't mention them all. Let it suffice to say that regardless of the claim made by some critics that there is lack of unity in the three cantares, one must admit that there is no lack of unity in the overall use of realism in the poem. It is this consistent use of realism throughout which makes of the poem the valuable storehouse of customs which it is, and the masterpiece of literature which has continued to delight its readers for centuries.

NOTES

1. Poema de mío Cid, 2a edición (R. Menéndez Pidal), (Madrid: "Clásicos Castellanos," 1923), 50. All quotations are from this work.
2. For the use of the imperfect tense as a device for heightening reality and life in the narrative portions of the Cid, see Professor Stephen Gilmore's article in Comparative Literature, Fall, 1956.
3. Edmund de Chasca, Estructura y forma en EL POEMA DE MIO CID (University of Iowa Press, 1955).

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COME IL LETTERATO ITALIANO VEDE L'AMERICA

By Joseph Vittorio Greco, University of Pittsburgh

Il letterato italiano ha sempre mantenuto un vivo interesse nelle vicende della nostra vita americana. Dal principio fino ai nostri giorni l'America è stata oggetto d'ispirazione e di poesia per gli scrittori d'Italia. Per esempio, quando l'Europa ci guardava in cagnesco, l'apostolo della libertà, Vittorio Alfieri, cantava l'America libera:

Tu, vivo ancor, fra' semidei già posto,
FRANKLIN, padre, consiglio, anima, mente
Di libertà nascente;
Tu mi sii scorta al canto; ho in te riposto
Speme, che di nascosto
Dramma d'etereo foco,
Ond'hai tu il tutto, entro il mio petto or spiri;
Sì, che se laude in te più non ha loco,
Nel tuo secondo audacemente io miri.¹

E ancor prima di questo illustre poeta, da Colombo in poi, quasi tutti gl'Italiani hanno seguito l'evoluzione della nostra feconda terra dall'infanzia sino alla maturità; dall'umile nascita alla nostra presente grandezza. E dopo l'ultima guerra mondiale, troviamo una schiera di scrittori italiani che si occupa, forse ancor di più, del nostro paese. Sì, è vero che lo scrittore italiano non è sempre esatto nè magnanimo nel descriverci; anzi, direi che è stato un super-critico spesso severo della nostra terra. Però non si può negare che egli ha sempre avuto un ardente desiderio di conoscerci. Ha voluto indagare le nostre istituzioni, la nostra vita politica, la nostra vita intellettuale e artistica; in fine ha voluto conoscere tutti gli aspetti della nostra civiltà; perfino la nostra debolezza e la nostra forza, i nostri vizi e le nostre virtù, il nostro odio e il nostro amore.

A che cosa bisogna attribuire quest'interesse? Forse, credo io, perchè l'America rappresenta per l'Italiano un faro di bene; l'Eden Terrestre che si cerca in vano nella vita giornaliera, però non si trova mai.

Oggi il fecondo e versatile scrittore, Guido Piovene, risponde in parte alla nostra domanda affermando che "agli Stati Uniti è legato il nostro destino."² Anche Giuseppe Prezzolini ha la stessa impressione perchè vuole dare "un'idea del paese verso il quale son rivolti gli occhi di tutti, e dalle sorti del quale dipendon anche quelle, almeno in parte, di gran parte degli altri paesi, compresa l'Italia per la quale il libro fu compilato."³

I due libri che vorrei discutere, perchè è interessante osservare le analogie e le divergenze nel pensiero dei due autori, sono De America di Guido Piovene e America in pantofole di Giuseppe Prezzolini; questi scrive dell'America vivendo a New York da molti anni, vedendola dalla sua finestra, per così dire; quegli vede il nostro paese viaggiando da oriente a occidente, da settentrione a mezzogiorno, su un'automobile guidata da sua moglie. E dopo aver viaggiato oltre ventimila miglia, tra l'autunno del 1951 e quello dell'anno seguente. Il Piovene manda al Corriere della Sera una serie di articoli sul suo viaggio; ecco, dunque l'origine di questo libro.

Pure America in pantofole è stato compilato dagli articoli per il Tempo. Questi due libri furono scritti con lo stesso scopo; cioè per dare al pubblico italiano un quadro vivente della nostra civiltà.

Il Prezzolini ha osservato che l'America ha cambiato il suo sistema di vita radicalmente; e lui incolpa la personalità di Roosevelt e le due guerre mondiali per questo cambiamento. E da questo punto di vista deriva il suo tema dominante del libro America in pantofole sostenendo che "in questo momento... la direzione è verso la sicurezza, non verso la libera iniziativa. Gli Americani, intanto, non portano più le ghettoni di daino dei pionieri; vogliono mettersi le pantofole dei pensionati."⁴

Il leit-motiv del Piovene è, a mio giudizio, dal principio del libro fino alla fine, che la nostra civiltà è basata sul rifiuto al dolore, e lui osserva che la nostra religione è anti-dolore e anti-morte. Che cosa pensa il Piovene del nostro Cristo? Ecco alcuni brani, i leit-motive del libro: "Il Cristo americano è un Cristo senza croce, che nasce, si direbbe, dal suo trionfo sul dolore e la morte, un Cristo la cui Passione è lasciata in ombra e di cui solamente la Resurrezione si illumina, un Cristo tutto guaritore e tutto redentore."⁵ Il Piovene va a guardare nelle usanze d'ogni giorno per provare il suo leit-motiv; per esempio:

Per quanto riguarda le droghe, sono un aspetto del rifiuto al dolore, essenza della civiltà americana. Un'inclinazione alla droga si scopre anche nelle pratiche più innocenti. Per esempio, l'enorme consumo di colciumi. Si vuole comprare una boccetta di ammoniaca, ma l'ammoniaca che i negozi offrono è profumata. Così la vernice per le unghie di qualità popolare. Chiudo una busta: la bocca mi si riempie di un sapore di caramella, mescolato alla gomma.⁶

E assurge ad un'affermazione più comprensiva dicendo che "La civiltà americana, sotto ogni latitudine, è sempre rifiuto al dolore"⁷... Una civiltà nuova di comodità e d'ascesi; una battaglia ascetica per il benes-

sere indolore."⁸

Durante la sua visita del famoso cimitero Forest Lawn, il Piovene è più che convinto di quel che dice della nostra civiltà indolore. Lui osserva attentamente questo singolare camposanto per far risaltare il suo ritornello: sopprimere il dolore e la morte. Il sogno di Hubert Eaton era che il cimitero dovesse essere un luogo piacevole "dove non ci sia la morte, ma solo la vita, la gioia, l'amore ... Poesie, scolpite in ogni angolo, ci parlano, solo di alberi, di fiori, di bimbi e dell'amore coniugale o materno: niente parole di dolore."⁹ Ecco, quel che pensa il Piovene del cimitero: "Ho già detto che in California si hanno le deformazioni iperboliche delle 'note caratteristiche,' dell'animo americano. Forest Lawn è la caricatura di un sentimento vero e per molti aspetti efficace che ho illustrato più volte: la negazione della morte."¹⁰

Nelle conclusioni il Piovene scrive che un profondo osservatore della vita americana gli dice "che l'America è governata da una specie di edonismo negativo: non cerca il piacere, ma fugge il dolore; non vuol godere, ma evita la sofferenza."¹¹ Questo, secondo l'autore, è stato uno dei fili conduttori durante il suo viaggio negli Stati Uniti. E cerca di scoprire i mezzi che tendono a porre in atto questa volontà di non soffrire. La prima spiegazione la trova nella nostra speciale forma di cristianesimo: "Mi è capitato di ascoltare prediche in chiese d'ogni confessione cristiana. Mi ha impressionato il costatare quanta poca parte si dia, rispetto all'Europa, agli aspetti luttuosi e tragici della vita di Cristo, e in generale alla Passione."¹² Un'altra spiegazione la trova nella nostra vita "materialista"; nell'edonismo negativo; nelle macchine che sono strumenti "per liberare l'uomo, per esentarlo dalla parte più dolorosa del lavoro, quella in cui ci si sporca, ci si deforma e ci si umilia."¹³ La trova nella scienza medica; "troppi medici, troppe pillole, troppi cioccolatini, sempre qualcosa che attutisce la vita."¹⁴ Quasi al principio del libro il Piovene scrive: "Si sa che la medicina in America non è una scienza, ma un aspetto essenziale d'una nazione in cui la lotta contro il dolore e la morte è un tema religioso-morale costante. La medicina qui s'incontra dovunque, è una specie di fondera di tutti gli atti della vita."¹⁵

Dunque se l'Americano cerca di eliminare il dolore e la morte dalla vita quotidiana è perchè la nostra Costituzione garantisce ai suoi cittadini the pursuit of happiness che è un punto assai importante del documento. E il Prezzolini aveva osservato con giusta ragione che la nostra Costituzione "che risale alla cultura di Jefferson, alla mentalità di Washington, alle letture di Benjamin Franklin, cioè che l'uomo ha per scopo la felicità terrena e che lo Stato non è se non l'organo, il servitore, lo strumento che deve procurargli i mezzi di questa felicità."¹⁶

Tanto il Prezzolini quanto il Piovene osservano che "L'Americano di tutti i ceti è restless (irrequieto) e migratore; tende a spostarsi senza posa, o se non può farlo, lo sogna; e la qualità delle case, per lo più di legno e neglette, rispecchia l'irrequietezza degli animi."¹⁷ Secondo quegli,

L'americano è sempre, da che tal si fece, emigrante, ossia fuggiasco. È un nomade, scontento del luogo dove si trova, e che, se si ferma, pensa già al luogo dov'andrà domani... Terre e case portano l'impronta della mancanza di affetto e di eredità. Si lascia dietro le rovine di ciò che fu goduto, ma non curato, il campo sventrato ma non coltivato, il mobilio consumato ma non restaurato, la casa dove s'è vissuto ma come una tenda... il turismo non è uno svago; è l'essenza dello spirito americano.¹⁸

L'Americano va girellando senza posa perchè "gli Americani sono fuggiaschi dai paesi d'Europa; hanno fuggito la miseria, l'oppressione, i debiti, le lotte religiose o politiche; e conservano la psicologia del fuggiasco, cioè lo scarso attaccamento al proprio domicilio."¹⁹

Il Piovene pensa che "il popolo americano viaggia per diletto e per vocazione... Viaggia anche perchè cambia continuamente il luogo e la qualità del lavoro."²⁰ Se l'Americano si attacca a New York, il suo "attaccamento ha un perchè. È perchè vi sono gli affari, i ristoranti, i teatri, le compagnie."²¹

È oramai opinione comune che l'Europeo ha sempre visto l'Americano medio come un fenomeno sociale a parte del consorzio umano; cioè l'ha visto come una persona che poco si è occupato della cultura; e perciò l'ha trovato un tantino ignorante. Il Prezzolini, per non tradire la vecchia tradizione, ripete la ben nota opinione dicendo che "L'Americano medio è più ignorante, sempre parlando in generale, dell'Europeo medio, sebbene nel proprio mestiere sia più competente, accurato e specializzato."²² Il Piovene, da l'altro lato, pensa che "Tolti alcuni settori, il lavoro in America è poco specializzato; l'americano medio non cerca questo o quel lavoro, ma lavoro genericamente; prende quello che trova e se può scegliere, sceglie il più redditizio."²³

Passiamo adesso ai principi morali americani che anni or sono erano ammirati dal mondo intero, oggi invece sono vilificati; anzi lo scrittore europeo spesso ci rinfaccia la nostra condotta durante e dopo la seconda guerra. E il Piovene scrive sul problema dei nostri principi morali:

Si rimprovera all'America di avere in parte lasciato i principi morali per i quali combatteva, assimilando nella lotta la tecnica dell'avversario, la sua violenza, il suo criterio che il fine giustifica i mezzi. Vedendo i suoi mezzi di lotta adottati

per batterlo, il fascismo si trova giustificato nella stessa sconfitta, si trapianta tra i vincitori, semi-corrotti dalla loro vittoria. Già la condotta della guerra aveva preannunziato la corruzione, i bombardamenti delle città europee, l'intimazione della resa incondizionata con l'assoggettamento totale dell'avversario, di tipo fascista (Etiopia); il lancio delle bombe atomiche sul Giappone; e subito dopo la guerra il processo di Norimberga nel quale i vincitori furono giudicati dei vinti²⁴ [sic] invece di rimettere il verdetto ai neutrali... La conclusione sembra dunque che l'America avrebbe una forza e un ascendente irresistibile (ed invece non li ha) se avesse conservato puri i propri principi morali e avesse condotto a fondo una più radicale riforma sociale-economica. Il conflitto tra i due sistemi, l'americano ed il sovietico, si sarebbe vanificato, mentre oggi è pencolante e d'esito incerto.²⁵

Il Prezzolini, dopo aver ponderato ben bene questo problema, avvertiva il fenomeno d'una inversione di alcuni principi morali, cioè:

... oggi la tecnica politica è progredita assai, e c'insegna che la bugia, la simulazione, e dissimulazione, il tradimento, la crudeltà sono cose magnifiche se compiute per la causa del comunismo... Di fronte a questi avversari, la vecchia Democrazia Americana, che era abituata a pensare soltanto ai "martiri" del 1789 o del 1848, non sa che cosa fare. È costretta ad adottare i sistemi degli avversari.²⁶

Il Prezzolini ci ha già dato la botta e risposta una sessantina di pagine in dietro quando ei dice: "Non si discute sui principi, quando si tratta di vivere o di morire."²⁷

Un altro punto interessante di questi due libri è come questi autori vedono la nostra vita economica e che cosa pensano del danaro. Il Piovene osserva:

Guardando bene addentro in questo paese, dove il semplice essere al mondo non è una gioia, si vedrà come la "difesa economica," la vita "budgeted," la tensione costante per difendere rischiosamente un alto tenore di vita, hanno un preciso ufficio di moralità sociale; ed il danaro è un reagente morale, una espressione del dovere. Alla domanda, se è vero che qui il danaro abbia tanto valore, bisogna rispondere insieme con un sì e con un no. Ha più valore che da noi, perchè è più necessario alla difesa della vita;

perciò gli americani ne parlano spesso. Meno valore che da noi, nel senso della vanità e del prestigio; il semplice essere ricchi non dà risonanza sociale. Direi che il danaro assilla di più ma splende meno.²⁸

Il Piovene usa una magnifica metafora parlando del danaro e del guadagno; eccola: "Il danaro, il guadagno, in America sono una necessità per stare a galla. (La differenza tra la vecchia Europa e l'America... è che l'Europa è come la Terra; si sta su anche da fermi. L'America è come l'acqua; o si nuota, o si annega).²⁹

Il Prezzolini dall'altra parte ha osservato:

...il malanno più grave della vita di questo paese è il culto eccessivo della ricchezza di danaro. Non c'è aspetto della vita americana che non mostri gli effetti distruttivi di quella che si può chiamare la "dollarite," cioè l'apprezzamento delle attività umane in ragione del loro valore economico e del loro reddito economico. Una società abituata a valutare i propri uomini in base allo stipendio che ricevono, corrompe per forza le attività sociali e statali. Non c'è nulla che sia storto e travisato dalla smania del denaro... In politica e nel giornalismo, nel commercio e nell'insegnamento gli Americani idealisti ed onesti debbono sempre tener d'occhio la possibilità di vedere le loro istituzioni, e le loro imprese trasformate dalla smania di fare denaro ad ogni costo.³⁰

E il Prezzolini continua a dire che "l'Americano comune spesso perde la valutazione delle cose stesse. Un campo, una casa, una villa, una fabbrica non valgon per sè, ma per quella somma che posson far incassare al proprietario."³¹ Come si vede questi due autori son convinti che la nostra civiltà è basata per lo più sul danaro e l'Americano vede ogni cosa con l'occhio di Mammona per stare a galla.

Ora fermiamoci a considerare la spina dolorosa nel fianco del nostro paese. Questa spina che ha dato e sta dando tanto filo da torcere alla vita sociale della Nazione. Pare incredibile, ma purtroppo è vero che in un mondo tanto evoluto, come il nostro, il problema razziale rimane tuttavia insoluto. Questi due autori riflettendo su questa nostra spina dolorosa vedono l'eguaglianza americana in modi un po' differenti. Il Piovene dice che "oggi, e probabilmente negli anni futuri, il benessere, e in modo speciale quel benessere meccanizzato, unifica l'America, mescola i ceti, ne rende indistinti i confini."³² Il Prezzolini scrive invece:

I principi di eguaglianza, scritti nella Costituzione, ed ai quali credono sinceramente molte migliaia di idealisti americani, sono contraddetti nella pratica da milioni di persone, e talvolta da quegli stessi idealisti, che non se ne accorgono ... Salvo l'India, in nessun paese del mondo la differenza delle razze è così sentita come negli Stati Uniti ... Ed invece le due guerre mondiali ... sono state per gli Americani un fattore di coesione e di fusione nazionale.³³

In un altro capitolo il Prezzolini ci dice che "l'Eguaglianza di tutti non è una realtà in America, anzi direi che per certi aspetti lo è meno che in altri paesi non democratici; ma è un mito rispettato ed accettato."³⁴

Il Piovene nelle conclusioni confessa che "se poi dovessi dire che mi ha colpito di più nell'America d'oggi, mi fisserei su due punti: il primo è la libertà del distacco ... l'altro è l'adattamento tattico dei ceti alti alle mutate condizioni da Roosevelt in poi."³⁵ Lui non crede che i ceti alti abbiano perduto parte del loro potere in America; ma costata che questi ceti alti hanno smobilitato le grandi case, caratteristica dei "miliardari" ante-Roosevelt. Il Piovene se la cava diplomaticamente, mentre il Prezzolini non è tanto magnanimo con il fu presidente Roosevelt; dice tra l'altro:

Roosevelt, insieme con Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Churchill, egli è stato semplicemente lo strumento d'una trasformazione sociale e politica comune a tutto il mondo industriale, che ha preso in ogni paese le forme e il tempo adatto alle tradizioni di esso, cruenta ed asiatica in Russia, tragica ed eroica in Germania, medioevale e rinascimentale in Italia, da "gentiluomini" in Inghilterra e da "uomini d'affari" in America.³⁶

E più in là continua con la sua invettiva:

Roosevelt passerà nella storia come uno dei più grandi distruttori del nostro tempo. Distruttore del denaro americano, distruttore dell'equilibrio europeo, distruttore della borghesia inglese. Non si osa pubblicare tutte le carte da lui lasciate. Non si osano rivelare i patti di Yalta.³⁷

E come vedono la nostra potenza nel mondo questi due scrittori italiani? Sin dal principio del libro il Piovene osserva:

L'America è ancora oggi il teatro passivo di gesti imperiali strappati dalla necessità, non dalla convinzione, e perciò

confusi e poco coerenti³⁸... Vi è dunque nell'America qualcosa di sordo e distratto. Abbastanza giusta è l'accusa di scarsa coscienza imperiale in quello che ormai è un impero di fatto.³⁹

Su questo argomento il Piovene è d'accordo con il Prezzolini quando dice che l'America "è un impero di fatto, contro la propria volontà, in cui non scorgo nè una coscienza imperiale, nè un'idea da irradiare: l'America-idea si è stinta. [Piovene si riferisce all'America di Lincoln.] Invece scorgo confusione, isteria, corruzione politica, egoismo."⁴⁰

Il Prezzolini dice:

Gli Americani si sono fatti un impero nel mondo, senza saperlo e senza volerlo... Ora che gli Americani hanno un impero, incominciano ad accorgersene e a sentire i pesi che accompagnano l'impero. Prima di tutto la rivalità dell'altro imperialismo crescente, il Russo; poi la gelosia dell'imperialismo calante, il Britannico; finalmente l'antipatia di tanti popoli cui non garba sentirsi costretti a chiedere aiuto.⁴¹

In conclusione bisogna dire che i nostri autori amano la nostra terra. Il Piovene dice che ha cominciato ad amare l'America quando ha lasciato le città e ha iniziato la vita della strada. Il Prezzolini anche lui si dichiara un ardente ammiratore dell'America. E questa ammirazione, per lo più fra le righe, viene palese quando scrive:

Io non posso arrendermi alle critiche, che tuttavia leggo spesso con gusto e con ammirazione, degli intellettuali americani, quando vedo la potenza americana alzarsi in tutto il mondo così alta che la sua ombra, attraverso l'Europa giunge fino all'Asia... c'è maggior ammirazione fra gli intellettuali d'Europa per l'America che fra gli intellettuali d'America.⁴²

E poi se lui non avesse amato l'America, non credo che sarebbe rimasto a New York per una trentina d'anni. Dunque, la loro critica del nostro paese non è affatto inclinata a distruggere, ma è costruttiva, perchè essi vorrebbero vedere la nostra terra potente in tutti gli aspetti della vita, ben guidata, ben governata, virtuosa, amata e ammirata da tutti. Forse gli increduli diranno che a questo desiderio c'è un perchè, un secondo fine; e questo secondo fine è che le sorti della loro patria sono legate strettamente ai destini dell'America. Sia quel che sia, però leggendo i due libri si

sente un candore, una semplicità che affascina il lettore. Sono, per conto mio, due osservatori ottimisti della nostra civiltà. Il Piovene ci confessa che durante il suo viaggio ha cercato di vedere tutto senza la minima ombra di pessimismo; e nello stesso tempo cerca di essere soprattutto oggettivo nella sua discussione del nostro paese. In fine, questi due scrittori vedono l'America come lo Stato egemonico, come la speranza e la forza unitaria fra le attività umane.

NOTES

1. Vittorio Alfieri, Le Opere: America Libera, IV Ode, Vol. XII, per Nicolo Zanon Bettoni, Padova, 1810, versi 8-16, p. 77.
2. Guido Piovene, De America (Milano: Garzanti, 1954), p.1.
3. Giuseppe Prezzolini, America in Pantofole (Firenze: Vallecchi, 1950), p. 9-10.
4. Prezzolini, 270.
5. Piovene, Introduzione, xx.
6. Ibid., 203.
7. Ibid., 331.
8. Ibid., 341.
9. Ibid., 369.
10. Ibid., 372.
11. Ibid., 469-70.
12. Ibid., 470.
13. Ibid., 471.
14. Ibid., 472.
15. Ibid., 180.
16. Prezzolini, 60.
17. Piovene, 209.
18. Prezzolini, 76.
19. Ibid., 52.
20. Piovene, 271.
21. Ibid., 265.
22. Prezzolini, 36.
23. Piovene, 271.
24. Qui l'autore voleva dire che "e vinti furono giudicati dai vincitori."
25. Piovene, 223-24.
26. Prezzolini, 262.
27. Ibid., 200.
28. Piovene, 53.
29. Ibid., 95.
30. Prezzolini, 31.
31. Ibid., 32.
32. Piovene, 482.
33. Prezzolini, 30.
34. Ibid., 83.
35. Piovene, 479.
36. Prezzolini, 14.
37. Ibid., 219.
38. Piovene, 16.
39. Ibid., 495.
40. Ibid., 490.
41. Prezzolini, 183.
42. Ibid., 405.

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MELODRAMA AND BALZAC REAPPEARERS

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Over the decades, there has been frequent comment--and occasional learning--about the 550-or-so personages who constitute what may be viewed as a sort of full-time resident population in the grandiose society of Balzac's Comédie Humaine. These 550 are the characters which the novelist kept introducing and reintroducing, principally from 1834 on, into some seventy-five stories which he was writing for the first time or had been revising since original printings dating back to 1829. Census-fashion, these reappearers are scarcely numerous enough to match even Bedford up in Trimble County, but they nevertheless richly represent the vast range of French society as Balzac so perceptively saw it twelve and thirteen decades ago. Duly certified Balzicians to-day still delight in the happy fantasy of commingling themselves into this world of reappearers, as if these were real and living French citizenry, and it must be confessed that the novelist provides temptation for anyone to seek for himself a cherished place. Incidentally, in the amiable game set up by the American Balzac Society, the gentle William Hobart Royce was made to play the worse-than-scoundrel Philippe Bridau. In any case, legend has it that Balzac himself, when at death's door, chose to call for Bianchon, the good doctor whose deeds shine through no fewer than twenty-eight of the stories.

Discussion of the reappearing characters began with Balzac's own enthusiasm when in 1833 he wrote his sister that, having happened upon the notion of reappearances, he quite frankly found himself "on the road to becoming a genius." Perhaps discovery of the idea derived from the great contemporary popularity of James Fenimore Cooper. Moreover, in French literature, the procedure goes back at least as far as Chrétien de Troyes and his twelfth century Arthurian romances.

During the past thirty or forty years, the various researchers interested in the reappearing characters have talked only of obvious rôles in different plots or in various aspects of early nineteenth century society. After all this time, therefore, it is amazing that there can be any facet of Balzac's reappearing-character technique still unnoticed. But, so far as I know, the fact remains that no scholar or critic in the field has thought of connecting the reappearers as such with what the Comédie Humaine offers by way of mere melodramatics and romantic theatricality. A few illustrations will suffice to point up what should have been self-evident years ago, and these provide the subject for this rapid sketch.

As the reader moves through the stories he enjoys increasingly his

sense of acquaintance with the reappearing characters: this fact is, of course, elementary, and has been restated many times. Another bit of elementary knowledge is the fact that Le Père Goriot is virtually always the first or second novel which any reader selects for his introduction to Balzac. The scheming, sparkling, but as yet far from insensitive Rastignac is one of this novel's memorable characters. He alone stays devotedly loyal to Goriot, he alone goes up with an old man-servant to the Père Lachaise cemetery when Goriot is buried, whereas the latter's ingrate daughters send only empty coaches to represent them. In a sentence for which he should have felt shame, Balzac tells how Rastignac "looked at the grave, and there buried his last youthful tear, a tear wrenched forth by the pious feelings in a pure heart, one of those tears which, from the ground into which they fall, gush upward again to the heavens." After which, Rastignac looks down at the lighted city below, hurls his challenge at Paris, and then leaves to dine with one of the self-same heartless daughters. This theatrical ending comes to mind again and again as Rastignac reappears in two dozen novels. But, concerning him, the most successful theater of all is developed calmly and smoothly in the Curé de village, where one meets, not the famous Rastignac, but his clerical brother Gabriel.

Balzac's device in the Curé de village could not be simpler, but it is perhaps the more effective for that reason. The personage of the title is a superbly described priest, selflessly dedicated to his impoverished, woe-begone village parish. For the purposes of the story, no better contrast could be managed than through such a priest's meeting with Gabriel de Rastignac. This is, of course, unabashed theatricality, but its graceful perpetration merits credit. The priest Rastignac is no hypocritical ecclesiastic like Troubert in the Curé de Tours, but rather a man who can combine honest piety with an ambition which is less than unworldly. He is the natural religious counterpart for the better known brother who, wisely enough, never dreams of quitting the laity. In other words, when the name of Gabriel de Rastignac is introduced in the Curé de village, the reader's imagination immediately quickens and finds gratifying reward.

If it be granted that Balzac succeeds with a priestly Rastignac, he is less felicitous in what may be called "Operation Sensation," in his L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine. This is a minor but rather appealing story about a group of individuals engaged in various complicated works of charity. Two reasons, however, seal Balzac's artistic failure with these particular reappearing characters: first, the novel is strenuously and awkwardly tied in with Les Chouans (written some fifteen years earlier); second, one of the recipients of the charity turns out to be a magistrate who, years before, had had his present benefactress imprisoned and her daughter executed. Also, L'Envers de l'histoire contemporaine ends in a drenching wallow of nobility, self-sacrifice, prostration at feet, and forgiveness. Still, if one

has already read Les Chouans, one finds in the later novel a mildly pleasant feeling of old-home-week melodrama.

Every now and then, Balzac resorts to the needless makeshift of narration within narration. Of this, among the worst examples are two longish short stories, "Sarrasine" and "Un Prince de la Bohême." However, both are of interest for what the novelist does with some reappearing characters who form a talkative listening audience. In both, the chief talkative listener is Béatrix de Rochefide, unwinsome "heroine" of the mediocre novel Béatrix, who, however, is not brought into either of the two short stories until Balzac's revisions of 1844 and 1846. Post-1844 readers of the preposterous "Sarrasine" pot-boiler were intended by its author to be thrilled by Béatrix and her ludicrously self-dramatizing chatter recorded on the last couple of pages. But literary conditions in the "Prince de la Bohême" are still worse: the very confusion of names will serve to illustrate both Balzac's point and mine. In the first two versions of the "Prince de la Bohême," the story of La Palférine's philandering is related by a Raoul Nathan to the wife of Rastignac. Once the story is ended and Rastignac's wife is no longer present, Nathan speaks to some unidentified person who, contradictorily enough, has been the real narrator all the time. And this device is dredged up solely for a theatrical dividend at the very end, where Balzac proclaims that Rastignac's wife is infatuated with La Palférine! The author's technique for the 1846 edition is better organized, but the result is still mediocre: here, Nathan has told the story to Béatrix, adding that it has been written up for publication by the dull-witted heroine of yet another novel (La Muse du département). Finally, to make the general confusion worse, the theatrical dividend becomes nothing more than a retelling of the conclusion of the novel Béatrix. One is led to suspect that the gentle reader will be less than enthralled to learn that a frivolous Béatrix will love a frivolous La Palférine, and that it will not take long for either one to recover. The point is that Balzac is always ready to strain for the theatrical thrill, but in "Sarrasine" and the "Prince de la Bohême" both he and his reappearers achieve nothing higher than melodramatic discomfort.

As was pointed out some years ago in a Chicago dissertation, the long short story, "Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan," is of importance, "since it supplies the conclusion to two brilliant careers in the Comédie Humaine, that of the famous Diane de Maufrigneuse and that of the illustrious Daniel d'Arthez."¹ Diane, the princess of Cadignan, is one of Balzac's favorite predatory women, while Arthez is his noblest member of the writers' fraternity. The chronicle of her "secrets" tells of her one true love, and of her titanic strategy in making it an accomplished fact. The final lines of the story are bad enough to warrant quotation: "From that day, there has been no further problem about the princess of Cadignan nor about Arthez... His publications have become excessively infrequent. Is this a

dénouement? Yes, for bright people; no, for those who have to know all. "

In case, by now, the writer of this paper is being suspected of anti-Balzac bias, let attention be called to pleasanter materials, materials which again bring to mind the novelist's success with Gabriel de Rastignac. One illustration involves a mere two lines in Ursule Mirouet, the other some high-grade melodrama in "L'Interdiction." To account for the first, it is necessary to recall a story of only moderate significance, Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées, which consists primarily of letters exchanged between a somewhat tempestuous romantic and her best friend, the calmly domestic and completely happy Renée de l'Estorade. Neither bride appears in Ursule Mirouet, except that just at the end when at last Ursule is blissfully married, Balzac inserts this: "'It's the sweetest happiness I have ever seen," said the countess de l'Estorade." If her comment adds anything to the novel, the reader who knows the Mémoires de deux jeunes mariées would wholly approve of the countess as the one to say it.

As for the sharp bit of theater which resolves the story of "L'Interdiction," the reader should first be acquainted with the petty and self-seeking judge Camusot de Marville, who has figured conspicuously in the Cabinet des Antiques and also in Splendeurs et Misères. "L'Interdiction" recounts the stratagems of a wife to have her admirable husband committed as insane, the success of an honest judge who ferrets out the treachery, and the incident which on the final page brings in Camusot to pass final judgment. At the end of the story, the honest magistrate makes an innocent blunder which removes him from the case, so that Camusot replaces him in the last two paragraphs. With a reticence quite at variance with the childish ending of "Les Secrets de la Princesse de Cadignan," Balzac stops short, without explaining that Camusot guarantees the tragic outcome. But, while the reader who has not met Camusot previously is not left in doubt, the reader who does know him will find no sounder instance of the reappearing-character technique. Incidentally, Balzac did not hit upon the Camusot device until eight years after his first edition of the story!

A formal conclusion in terms of these few illustrations seems hardly necessary. I shall only repeat that they give eloquent emphasis to a procedure in Balzac's romanticism which, for some reason, has apparently been overlooked. The oversight deserves correction, however, in the interest of his artistic successes, his artistic lapses, and, above all, his tireless workmanship and story-telling skills.

NOTES

1. Oliver E. Jackson, "The Evolution of Balzac's Comédie Humaine: Studies edited by E. Preston Dargan and Bernard Weinberg" (Chicago, 1942), p. 410.

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HEINE'S RETURN TO RELIGION: TWO CATHOLIC FACTORS

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February 17, 1956, marked the one hundredth anniversary of the death of Heinrich Heine, the greatest German lyric poet since Goethe. Most students of German have read his "Lorelei," the charming little lyric, "Du bist wie eine Blume," and perhaps "Ein Fichtenbaum steht einsam." They may even have heard that he jeered and scoffed at everything high and holy. Relatively few Americans realize, however, that he wrote extensively on literature, religion, philosophy, and politics, and that with remarkable perspicacity he divined coming events in Europe; also that in the last ten years of his life he underwent a great change in his religious thinking.

As a young student at the University of Berlin in the years 1821 to 1823, Heine became thoroughly steeped in Hegelian dialectic and absolute idealism, and he was quite delighted when the maestro once whispered to him confidentially: "There is no God." Heine began to think of himself as a two-legged god to whom other mortals offered their adoration. "Just as I had no enemies," he writes, "so there were for me no friends, but only believers, who believed in my glory, who worshiped me, who also praised my works, both those in verse and those in prose."¹ Nevertheless, as a matter of prudence, the conceited young poet embraced Lutheranism in 1825 when he took his doctorate at the University of Göttingen in the hope that this step would help him to get a university professorship or a post in the German government. He was bitterly disappointed in both expectations, and, thoroughly disgruntled, went to France in 1831 where he spent the last twenty-five years of his life.

In his first major prose work, Concerning the History of Religion and Philosophy in Germany, published in January, 1835, when Heine had just passed his thirty-seventh birthday, he said most disparaging things about the Christian religion. In those days, being thoroughly imbued with Saint-Simonism and Hegelianism, the poet-journalist dreamed of a Socialist heaven on earth with every physical want satisfied. He called the Church of Saint Peter in Rome a monument of sensuous delight. For a nominal Lutheran, he showed little enthusiasm for Protestantism although he praised Martin Luther as a translator, a polemicist, and a writer of hymns. Protestantism's chief value he held to be ethical, resulting in purity of manners and severity in the performance of duty, while the Gospel remained a beautiful parable. Protestant church history, he argued, consisted almost entirely of the theological quarrels of university professors of Wittenberg, Leipzig, and Halle. Coming to a discussion of the modern philosophers, he asserted

that Descartes had destroyed the hypocrisy of the Scholastics and that Immanuel Kant in his Critique of Pure Reason (1781) had paved the way for the destruction of Jehovah and all belief in deism. He concludes: "Do you hear the little bell ringing? Kneel down--they are bringing the sacraments to a dying god."²

But all was not well with this cocksure young pantheist, or, perhaps, atheist. Scarcely nine years later when Heine's health--never robust--was becoming seriously impaired, he began to doubt his own divinity. In a manuscript of the year 1844, discovered by the Heine scholar, Adolf Strodtmann, he expressed regret for many of the things he had written in this book. Nevertheless, he held that German rationalistic philosophy had dealt a mortal blow to Protestantism,

which, in order to prolong its existence, has made all possible concessions and which nevertheless must die: it avails nothing that it has purged its God of all anthropomorphism, that it through blood-letting has pumped out of him all sensual blood, that it has as it were filtered him into pure spirit that consists solely of love, justice, wisdom, and virtue..³

He now speaks of the German monks of atheism, who would burn Voltaire alive because he was an obdurate Deist. Hegel he calls the maestro who composed their music with such words as "All that is, is rational; all that is rational must be."⁴ A sadder but a wiser man, Heine already sees Communism as a logical sequence to the destruction of a belief in Heaven and claims that even then it was spreading all over Germany as a menace to everything that the artist holds dear.

In 1848, because of a progressive atrophy of the spine, Heine became absolutely bed-ridden and spent the eight remaining years of his life of almost unbearable pain in his "mattress-grave (Matratzengruft)" in Paris. Then his abjuration of his former pantheism and Hegelianism became complete, and in his Confessions, written and published in 1854, two years before his death, he openly professed his belief in a personal God and in the immortality of the soul. This change of heart has been described in two articles.⁵ The writer attributes this change to Heine's coming to his senses (as he himself admits) in the days of the February Revolution (1848), to his abdication of all philosophic pride, to his final discovery that the whole Hegelian system is an overt mockery of God, to his horror of Marxism and Communism, which he thought would destroy all values esteemed by the poet. These things and his intense suffering, accompanied by sleepless nights, were undoubtedly important factors in his return to theism.

Two potent influences, motivating this changed attitude and wholly unmentioned in the above articles, must now be considered: Heine's early

Catholic training in Germany and his French Catholic wife.

Heine grew up in Düsseldorf in the Catholic Rhineland. He was a frequent witness of church processions, and his first teachers were Catholics. In his Confessions he writes: "For it was Catholic priests to whom as a child I owed my first instruction; they directed my first intellectual steps."⁶ In the French lycée in Düsseldorf the teachers were nearly all Jesuits, and Heine praises their attractive textbooks and their clear, practical instruction. He held that they popularized and democratized the knowledge of antiquity so that it went over into the masses and was not reserved, as in the later Germany, for an intellectual clique. Proclaiming pedagogy the specialty of the Jesuits, he showed how the greatest men of the French Revolution had gone forth from their schools. He bewailed the fact that the Jesuits had in the mid-nineteenth century become the scapegoats of the liberal party. The mere mention of the name of Loyola, he said, put the liberals in a rage like bulls when a red flag was waved before them. Heine could not approve such behavior, for at the lycée the Jesuit director Schallmeyer, a friend of the Heine family, had been his favorite teacher and mentor and had even made plans for having Heine enter the service of the Church and go to Rome to study Catholic theology in a seminary. Of these plans Heine learned many years later when he visited his aged mother in Hamburg in 1843. Then he added playfully that he no doubt would have become Pope if he had followed such a career; as it was, he said, he had become merely a German poet--itself, no small accomplishment.

Indeed, as a young man, in his pre-Hegelian period, Heine seriously thought of becoming a Catholic, and several of his early poems celebrate Our Lady. In the twenty-stanza "Pilgrimage to Kevlaar" he describes a procession to this famous shrine, and among those who go in search of healing he includes a mother and her son, who is heart-broken because of the death of his beloved Gretchen. He brings a waxen heart and ends his agonizing prayer to the Queen of Heaven with the words:

Heil du mein krankes Herze--
Ich will auch spät und früh
Inbrünstiglich beten und singen:
Gelobt seist du, Marie!⁷

The prayer is answered the same night by the death of young Wilhelm, and his grieving but pious mother calmly acquiesces:

Die Mutter faltet die Hände,
Ihr war, sie wusste nicht wie;
Andächtig sang sie leise:
Gelobt seist du, Marie!⁸

Another poem to Our Lady, "Die Weihe" or "Consecration," written before 1816, portrays a pale youth kneeling before the Blessed Virgin Mary's statue and imploring a sign of her favor. The miracle occurs: forest and chapel vanish, the Madonna appears as a beautiful young girl who shows him the rainbow in the sky where angels are ascending and descending.

Unquestionably, in the long sleepless nights of his agony, Heine remembered with nostalgia the impressive Catholic worship he had known in his youth. In 1854 he wrote of himself:

I was always a poet, and therefore the poetry which blooms and flames in the symbolism of the Catholic worship necessarily revealed itself to me more deeply than to others; and not infrequently in my youth I too was overwhelmed by the infinite sweetness, the mysteriously blissful exuberance, and the shuddering joy-in-death of that poetry; I too was often ecstatic about the most Blessed Queen of Heaven; the legends of her favor and kindness I turned into dainty rhymes, and my first collection of poems contains traces of this beautiful Madonna period.⁹

Even some ten years after these earlier poems, in one of his marvelous songs of the Nordsee with their intriguing free rhythms--the forerunners of free verse--the poet spoke of his vision of Christ walking tall as a giant over land and sea. Heine, half-asleep and half-awake, lay in his boat on the still sea; looking up he beheld in his mind's eye the Savior of the world "in a white waving garment"--"Und als ein Herz in der Brust/ Trug er die Sonne, / Die rote, flammende Sonne,"¹⁰--from which hallowed, compassionate light, "widespread and warming," poured over the world.

In the Confessions, mentioned above, in which Heine tried to be absolutely truthful, he testified to his lasting and profound respect for the Catholic Church. Two years before he died he wrote:

With me there can be no question of fanatical hostility toward the Roman Church since I always lacked the narrow-mindedness that is necessary for such animosity. I knew too well my intellectual size not to know that with my most violent assaults I could damage little a colossus like St. Peter's Church... I was too well versed in history not to have recognized the gigantic proportions of that granite building;.. As a thinker, a metaphysician, I always had to admire the consistency of the Roman Catholic dogmatics; also I may boast of having never attacked the dogma or the worship by witticism or scoffing, and people have shown me too much honor and at the same time too much dishonor when they called me a spiritual relative of

Voltaire.¹¹

To prove the genuineness of his return to belief, Heine threw into the flames a work he had prepared explaining the Hegelian philosophy and wrote a long preface to the second edition of his earlier book on German philosophy and religion as an emphatic recantation of his earlier position. Here we read: "I confess without reserve that everything in this book which has reference to the great question of God is just as false as indiscreet."¹² As to Hegel's specific doctrines, he now believes that the serpent in Eden, "the first blue-stocking," put all those teachings in a few succinct words: "When you have eaten from the tree of knowledge, you will be as gods."¹³

We now come to the second important factor influencing Heine in his renewed interest in the Christian religion: his French Catholic wife. In October, 1834, Heine met the beautiful, vivacious salesgirl, Crescentia Eugenie Mirat. Although she was as unlearned and pleasure-loving as she was beautiful, she cast an indescribable spell over the German poet, who soon became her passionate lover. Except for a few months' break in 1835 after a violent quarrel, she was his constant companion and, after 1841, his faithful wife until his death. In spite of her extravagance, her hot temper and other faults, Crescentia (or Mathilde, as Heine preferred to call her) was a devout, practicing Catholic, and Heine saw her going to Mass regularly. Although she could not appreciate her Henri as a German poet--she spoke only French--still she was as concerned about his soul's welfare as Gretchen was about Faust's, and she finally prevailed upon him to have their union legitimized in the Catholic Church. On August 31, 1841, in Saint-Sulpice, a former Jesuit church, a Catholic priest married them after Heine had signed an agreement that any children who might be born should be brought up in the Catholic faith. The rumor even spread abroad that the poet himself had become a Catholic.

Mathilde's native cheerfulness and her deep devotion to Heine during the years of his unspeakable suffering helped him to keep up his courage. He was careful not to disturb her peace of mind, and he thoroughly approved Mathilde's regular attendance at Mass and the Sacraments. In one of his frequent references to the Church in his Confessions he declares that the Catholic confessional is an excellent institution. He says: "After Mathilde has been to confession and has obtained absolution for her sins, she returns home warbling like a bird, with her usual joie de vivre wholly restored."¹⁴ Humorous to the last, Heine observes further:

And still in another respect the confessional is so useful
here: the female sinner does not keep her terrible secret
long as a burden in her head; and since the women in the
end blurt out everything, it is better that they confess cer-

tain things only to their confessor than that they should run the danger in a sudden moment of overflowing tenderness, or love of gossip, or pangs of conscience, of making the fateful confession to the poor husband.¹⁵

Ernst Elster, the world's greatest Heine authority, says that in the last years of his life Heine had these two consolations: his German muse and his French wife. Indeed, all critics agree that from his "mattress-grave" Heine wrote some of his finest poetry in the Romancero, which appeared in 1851. But immeasurably beyond the above consolations, Heine had his newly found religious faith to sustain him. The poet, who tells of his "conversations" with God in the dark night-watches, had come to a powerful re-awakening regarding the worth to poor human beings of the book of books, the Holy Bible. In one of those luminous comments in his Confessions he compared himself in this respect with the hero of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which had only recently been published in America. Heine testified as follows:

The re-awakening of my religious feeling I owe to that Holy Book [the Bible], and it became for me both a source of salvation and an object of the most pious admiration. Strange! After I had jumped about all my life on all the dancing-floors of philosophy, had given myself over to all the orgies of the spirit, and had wooed all possible systems without being satisfied ... now I find myself on the same foundation on which Uncle Tom stands, that of the Bible. And I kneel down beside the black praying brother in the same devotion.¹⁶

Did Heine lack courage or was it a false loyalty to his Jewish kinsmen that finally prevented him from entering the Catholic Church?

Ten years before his death, Heine stipulated in his will that he should be buried in the Cemetery of Montmartre, preferably in the Catholic section, if such a privilege could be granted to a Lutheran, "so the earthly remains of my wife, who is most zealous in her devotion to this religion, may one day rest beside mine."¹⁷ On February 17, 1856, Heine died. He was buried, according to his wishes, without either priest or rabbi attending, with as little ceremony as possible. Twenty-seven years later to the day, the faithful Mathilde fell dead from a stroke and was buried beside him in the hilltop cemetery overlooking Paris. Today the great Eglise du Sacré Coeur stands about one-half mile east of the Cemetery of Montmartre--the Church of the Sacred Heart whose holy reconciling light Heine had envisioned years before in his North Sea poem, "Peace."

NOTES

1. Ernst Elster, Heinrich Heines Sämtliche Werke (Leipzig, 1893), VI, 49. All Heine quotations are from this first edition since the second edition (1924 ff.) was never completed. The English translations are my own.
2. IV, 246.
3. IV, 148.
4. IV, 149.
5. M. Whitcomb Hess: "Heine Found God," America, XCV, June 23, 1956, 306-307; and "A Last Century Liberal: Heinrich Heine (1797-1856)," The Catholic World, CLXXXIII, July, 1956, 281-285.
6. Elster, VI, 67.
7. I, 148.
8. Ibid.
9. VI, 66.
10. I, 178.
11. VI, 66.
12. IV, 156 and VI, 52.
13. IV, 158 and VI, 53.
14. VI, 64. A free paraphrase.
15. VI, 64.
16. VI, 54.
17. VII, 513.

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DER STIL HESSES ALS AUSDRUCK SEINER PERSÖNLICHKEIT

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In der heutigen Hessekritik verschwinden die Auseinandersetzungen über den Stil im grossen und ganzen neben der Behandlung metaphysischer und philosophischer Probleme, neben weltanschaulichen und psychologischen Auslegungen. Vielleicht ist es aber gerade die Art von Hesses Stil, die uns dazu Anlass gibt, ihn nicht besonders zu beachten, und die dem einfachen, bescheidenen Dasein des Dichters so sehr entspricht. Ein guter Stil fällt nicht auf. Die Gestalt passt sich so fugenlos und vollkommen dem Gehalt an, dass wir das Ganze als eine Einheit empfinden.

Es gilt nun festzustellen, ob sich der Stil Hesses immer und überall so reibungslos dem Gehalt anpasst, oder ob bei näherem Zusehen ein Schwanken und ein Suchen festzustellen ist.

Vergleichen wir den Stil der Jugendwerke des Dichters mit demjenigen aus der Mitte seines Lebens oder mit seinen kürzlich erschienenen Schriften, so stellen wir sofort Veränderungen fest, und es wird uns klar, dass es nicht nur einen Stil Hesses gibt. Der Dichter, der in seiner Jugend den Romantikern nahe steht, sucht einen Weg über den Realismus zum eigenen Stil, dessen Formung massgebend vom Schrifttum Indiens und vor allem Chinas beeinflusst wird.

Die Kritik versuchte oft, in Hesses frühesten Werken ästhetisierende Züge oder Einflüsse Georges nachzuweisen. Hesse selbst wendet sich gegen diese Interpretation und lehnt jeglichen Einfluss Georges und seines Kreises ab. Wir glauben aber in Eine Stunde hinter Mitternacht und in der frühen Prosa stimmungsmässige Anklänge an Böcklin, den Maler, dessen Werke Hesse in Basel kennenlernte, feststellen zu können. Hesses Verehrung von Jakob Burckhardt, der mit dem Maler befreundet war, hat wohl dazu beigetragen. Die Form der frühen Novellen entspricht ganz dem "Künstler Traumreich"¹ wie es der Dichter in seinem später dem Werk beigelegten Geleitwort nennt. Hesse erschafft sich eine unwirkliche Schönheitsinsel, die für ihn eine Zuflucht aus der Wirklichkeit bedeutet, und die erste Novelle der Sammlung heisst daher auch "Inseltraum." Die Sprache dieser Jugendwerke ist gehoben, ja oft pathetisch, der Rhythmus schwer und pompös, die Perioden lang und unnatürlich in Wortstellung und -gebrauch. Die Bilder sind allgemein gehalten, vage und unscharf; satte Farben herrschen vor, die Linie tritt zurück, und die Auswahl der Einzelheiten beruht eher auf Gefühlswert als auf Anschaulichkeit und Bildhaftigkeit. Es bedarf der mitschaffenden

Phantasie des Lesers, um aus den wenigen, flächigen, unwirklichen Farben, den kaum angedeuteten Formen und den oft seltsam gesuchten Verben Vorstellungen zu schaffen. Der Mangel an Wirklichkeitsnähe und Plastizität wird aufgehoben durch die Intensität der geschaffenen Stimmung, und gerade die Unbestimmtheit der Dinge und das geheimnisvolle Dämmer geben den Zeilen eine gefühlsmässige Dichte, die Hesse in den unmittelbar darauffolgenden Werken nicht mehr erreicht.

Der Dichter erkennt früh die für ihn zeit seines Lebens immanente Gefahr der Intraversion und des Versinkens ins rein Gefühlsmässige und in der Sprache ins allein Rhythmushafte und Klangliche. Er wendet sich daher langsam ab von dem, was er später selbst die "Gefahren einer teils weltscheuen, teils hochmütigen Vereinsamung"² nennt, und versucht in die Welt der Wirklichkeit einzudringen. Hermann Lauscher ist ein nicht ganz gelungener Versuch der Eroberung der Realität, und erst im Peter Camenzind festigt sich unter dem Einfluss Gottfried Kellers der Stil zur klaren, auf Beobachtung fussenden Wirklichkeitsbeschreibung. Raum und Zeit werden nun bestimmt, die Ausdrucks- und Bildkraft der Verben und Adjektive nimmt zu, genaue Beobachtung und sorgfältige Auswahl der Einzelheiten schaffen anschauliche, wirklichkeitsnahe Bilder und Vorstellungen. Die Farben treten zurück zugunsten der Linie. Rein formal wirkt sich diese neue Einstellung aus dem regelmässigen Gebrauch von Adjektiven, die der gewöhnlichen, alltäglichen Vorstellungswelt entnommen sind. Gebräuchliche Verben werden nun seltenen vorgezogen und einfache, dinghafte Substantive herrschen vor. Der Rhythmus wird durchsichtig und klar, die Sätze kürzer und ausgeglichener. Ein liedhafter, einfacher Ton durchzieht das Buch und trägt bei zur Schaffung des Eindruckes von Wahrhaftigkeit. Der Roman hinterlässt daher, trotz seines romantischen Inhaltes den Eindruck der Gestaltung eines Ausschnittes aus der Wirklichkeit, die Hesse nie ganz erobert hat.

In den darauffolgenden Novellen und Romanen strafft Hesse seinen Stil noch mehr und baut seine Bilder noch kürzer und prägnanter. Die subjektiv wertenden Adjektive treten zurück oder werden mit objektiv feststellenden Assoziationen verbunden, so dass ihr persönlich wertender Charakter abgeschwächt wird. In dieser Übergangszeit, in der Hesse auf verschiedenen Wegen versucht, zu einer Einheit zu gelangen, finden wir Stellen, die in ihrer Einfachheit fast nackt und kalt wirken. Die Vergegenständlichung schreitet weiter fort, Schönheit und Sinneseindruck werden oft der Verwesentlichung geopfert. Die Bewegtheit der Sprache wird eingeschränkt, und die Musik und die Farben stark gedämpft.

Dass die Romantik aber noch immer mitschwingt, zeigt ihr letztes wildes Aufflackern in einem grösseren Werk, das zugleich als Abrech-

nung und Überwindung zu werten ist. Klingsors letzter Sommer als letzter Ausdruck der rein romantischen Komponente in Hesses Persönlichkeit und in seinem Schaffen zeigt einen unzusammenhängenden, geballten Stil, der dem Inhalt entspricht. Die Worte hetzen sich und fallen oft ohne grammatische Regeln übereinander her. Die Sätze sind bald rein nominal, bald überbetont adjektivisch oder dann wieder vorwiegend verbal, was den Eindruck der Unausgeglichenheit verstärkt und das Schwanken Klingsors unterstreicht. Der Rhythmus drängt leidenschaftlich überschwenglich vorwärts, die Laute steigern sich oder prallen in scharfer Dissonanz aufeinander. Die ganze in seinen letzten Sommer gedrängte Lebensüberfülle Klingsors ist im Stil des Buches eingefangen, und wie der Maler zuletzt sein Ich ausweitet und das ganze All umschliesst, so schliesst der Stil alle lautlichen und rhythmischen Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten in sich und spannt die Fassungskraft der Sprache bis aufs Äusserste.

Welche Vielfalt des Ausdruckes Hesse zur Verfügung steht, erkennen wir, wenn wir den fast gleichzeitig entstandenen Siddharta mit dem Klingsor und seinem rastlosen, gedrängten Stil vergleichen. Die indische Erzählung zeichnet sich durch Gemessenheit des Stils, Verwesentlichung, Ruhe und Vereinfachung aus. Die Sprache ist metaphorischer, Verben und Adjektive weiten sich aus und werden allgemeingültiger, allumfassender. Der Rhythmus fliesst breit und ruhig. Der Stil tritt hinter dem Gehalt zurück, und doch bringt nur er die Gedanken voll zur Entwicklung und Blüte, unterstreicht sie oder schwächt sie ab.

Die volle Harmonie zwischen Gestalt und Gehalt hat Hesse wohl zuerst mit Narziss und Goldmund erreicht, dem Werk, in dem zuerst die zwei Welten des Geistes und des Lebens gleichberechtigt nebeneinander stehen, und er führt diese Harmonie dann weiter über die Morgenlandfahrt zum Glasperlenspiel. Wie sich der Gehalt mehr und mehr vom konkreten Geschehen löst und das Sinnenhafte neben dem Symbolischen zurücktreten lässt, so wird auch die Sprache vergeistigter, weniger bildhaft und anschaulich. Der Wortgebrauch vereinfacht sich noch mehr bis zur strikten Notwendigkeit. Die Perioden werden äusserst einfach und kristallklar. Ein Nachvollzug ist nun eher vom Rationalen als möglich, beinahe unter Ausschaltung der künstlerisch nachschaffenden Phantasie. Der Rhythmus gleitet gleichmässig daher, ruhig, abgelöst von weltlich leidenschaftlicher Bewegtheit. Und nur wo eine Erinnerung aus der Jugendzeit einfliesst, schwingt Wärme mit, und ein freundlicher persönlicher Hauch strömt aus den Zeilen. Die Beschränkung auf das Nur-Wesentliche, die Hesse bei den Chinesen gelernt hat, wird mit fortschreitendem Alter immer ausgeprägter.

Im Märchen "Der Dichter" heisst es von Han Fook, dem chinesischen Dichter, und der Hauptgestalt der Erzählung:

Und später begann er unter des Meisters Anweisung Gedichte zu machen, und er lernte langsam jene heimlich Kunst, scheinbar nur das Einfache und Schlichte zu sagen, damit in des Zuhörers Seele zu wühlen wie der Wind in einem Wasserspiegel. Er beschrieb das Kommen der Sonne, wie sie am Rande des Gebirges zögert, und das lautlose Huschen der Fische, wenn sie wie Schatten unter dem Wasser hinfliehen, oder das Wiegen einer jungen Wiese im Frühlingswind, und wenn man es hörte, so war es nicht die Sonne, das Spiel der Fische und das Flüstern der Wiese allein, sondern es schien der Himmel und die weite Welt jedesmal für einen Augenblick in vollkommener Musik zusammenzuklingen, und jeder Hörer dachte dabei mit Lust oder Schmerzen an das, was er liebte oder hasste, der Knabe an das Spiel, der Jüngling an die Geliebte und der Alte an den Tod.³

Es ist ein hohes Ideal, das Hesse in der Mitte seines Lebens aufstellt. Der chinesische Dichter erreicht unter der kundigen Leitung des Meisters des vollkommenen Wortes dieses Ideal des Ausdrucks, das für Hesse damals noch ein Ziel bedeutete. Denken wir aber heute an den Stil der Spätwerke, an seine Schlichtheit, Einfachheit, vergeistigte Eindringlichkeit und Wahrhaftigkeit, so glauben wir feststellen zu können, dass sich Hesse dem gesteckten Ziel weitgehend genähert hat.

Während sich in den grossen Werken eine gradlinige Entwicklung vom romantischen Stil der Jugendwerke über den Realismus zur Wesenhaftigkeit abzuzeichnen scheint, finden wir in des Dichters persönlichen Erzählungen und kleineren Skizzen, die während seines ganzen Lebens neben den grossen Werken her entstanden sind und uns oft mehr von seinem Bemühen um den ihm gemässen Ausdruck und von seinem eigentlichen Wesen eröffnen, schon früh Elemente seines Altersstils und noch in späteren Jahren romantische Formen und Ausdrucksweisen. Auch erkennen wir dort eher ein Suchen, ein Werden und ein Sich-Mischen von verschiedenen Formelementen, als in den Hauptwerken und grossen Romanen.

In der vielfältigen Natur des Dichters lagen von Anfang an alle Möglichkeiten des Ausdrucks, und die verschiedenen Stadien folgen sich nicht, sondern liegen nebeneinander. Während sich der Gehalt mit der Veränderung von Hesses Weltanschauung gewandelt hat, hat sich die Form nicht eigentlich verändert, sondern nur -- flexibel und mit feinem Künstlergefühl gehandhabt -- der geistigen Entwicklung angepasst.

Es mag uns erst erscheinen, dass Hesse seine Form in den Gedichten eher gefunden hat, als in der Prosa. Auch wir waren ursprünglich dieser Ansicht. Eine nähere Untersuchung zeigt aber, dass die Gedichte in Bezug auf den Gehalt weniger grosse Unterschiede aufweisen als die Prosa, und so ist es gegeben, dass die Veränderungen dort geringfügiger sein mussten als

in den Romanen, besonders wenn wir die tiefgreifende Anpassungsfähigkeit der Hesseschen Form an den Gehalt in Betracht ziehen.

Wir fragen uns abschliessend, warum trotz der festgestellten Vielheit und Schönheit der Ausdrucksweise Hesse als Stilist so wenig beachtet, ja oft übersehen wird. Neben der Tatsache, dass heute ästhetische Erwägungen neben metaphysischen allgemein zurückzutreten haben, mag wohl die Feststellung gelten, dass Hesses Stil sich nie aufdrängt, dass keines der Werke des Dichters als ästhetische Spielerei oder als künstlerischer Versuch entstanden ist. Alle seine Dichtungen zeugen von tiefer Wahrhaftigkeit, von einem ernsten Willen zu Echtheit und Aufrichtigkeit der Gefühle und Gedanken und von einer grossen Schönheitsliebe.

Ein feines Stilgefühl aber lässt Hesse überall den richtigen Ton wählen. Musik der Sprache und Rhythmus sind ihm von Natur eingeboren, und wenn er auch oft schwankt und den adäquaten Ausdruck sucht, so geschieht es in den Hauptwerken nie so auffällig, dass wir fühlen, wie er mit dem Stil ringt und an ihm arbeitet. Allerdings ist, von einigen Spätwerken abgesehen, ein Nachvollzug nur auf der Ebene des Irrationalen und der Kunst möglich. Hesse war daher lange -- und ist es wohl noch heute -- ein Dichter der Lebendigen und Mitfühlenden. In rein rationalistischen Kreisen werden meist nur seine Spätwerke anerkannt und geschätzt, weil der volle Genuss seiner andern Werke vom Leser mehr verlangt, als nur ein verstandesmässiges Verstehen. Wahre Kunst schliesst die sich der Vollendung nähernde Form ein und spiegelt die Welt so vollkommen wieder, dass der Leser "in diesen Spiegelbildern die Welt selbst geläutert und verewigt"⁴ besitzt, wie der nach Vollkommenheit strebende Dichter Han Fook in Hesses Märchen sagt.

NOTES

1. Frühe Prosa (Zürich: Fretz und Wasmuth, 1948), S. 13.
2. Ibid., S. 14.
3. Märchen, "Der Dichter" (Berlin: Fischer Verlag, 1919), S. 56-57.
4. Ibid., S. 49.

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RENART LE NOUVEL AND THE CLERICS

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The last Crusade had ended in failure in the Holy Land and the feudal world was facing upheaval when the Flemish poet, Jacquemart Gielée, put the finishing touches to Renart le Nouvel, one of the later sequels to the monumental epic of the goupil. The time was the last decade of the thirteenth century. The mediaeval world of northern France was on the threshold of a new era which would witness the victory of King over Pope and a continuing rise in the power of the monarchy. Naturally, the literature was beginning to reflect the new social age. No longer were works being written mainly for the diversion of a waning social class. The new writings continued to entertain, to be sure, but by their nature many were now satirical and highly critical of contemporary events.

In order to prepare his popular animal hero for the vital role he must play in a changing society, Gielée subjected the rascally Renart to an even greater sobering-up process than he had hitherto received. A marked change in Renart's nature had already been observed in other branches of the animal epic, such as Renart le Bestorné and the Couronnement de Renart, both of which were composed prior to Renart le Nouvel. By the time an anonymous clerk of Troyes completed his encyclopedic satire, Renart le Contrefait, some thirty years after Gielée's work, the transformation of Renart's character was complete.

In these later poems, which may be said to constitute a second cycle of the Roman de Renart, Renart incarnates the wickedness of the age and Noble, the lion, its virtues. Renart has ceased to be the cunning animal of the earlier poetic versions who took an impish delight in outwitting his fellow creatures. He is no longer a mirth-provoking animal; there is grim humor in his actions. Treachery, hypocrisy, baseness, indeed almost any contemptible trait associated with Renart became known as a renardie. At the beginning of Renart le Nouvel the author voices a resounding note of warning that Renart is everywhere present in the world:

Tant est li mons de mal afaire,
De fauseté et de mal art,
Li cuer sunt mais plain de renart.

Renart le Nouvel runs its course through 8048 verses and is divided into two unequal books. In all four extant manuscripts the name of Jacquemart Gielée appears as author. The manuscripts tell us that Gielée hailed from Lille, in Flanders, and that he wrote the poem within the years 1288-1292. It is regrettable that, thus far, the facts concerning the life of the

gifted Lillois are veiled in mystery.

Renart le Nouvel, although different in its conception from Renart le Bestorné and the Couronnement de Renart, is quite similar to those works in its satirical purpose. In these poems there is political intriguing at court and in at least two of the poems scheming is done by the Mendicant Orders. Jacquemart Gielée, especially, makes a corrupt clergy the target of his invectives. Gielée was undoubtedly familiar with the Couronnement de Renart and perhaps also with the Bestorné.

Renart le Bestorné, despite its obscurity and its brevity (for it consists of 162 short verses), is one of the most effective of Rutebeuf's satires. It is reasonable to assume that Noble, the lion, represents Louis IX. In that poem the wily Renart holds the reins of the government, riding à bride avalée over Saint Louis and his subjects.¹

The Mendicant Orders are objects of satire by the anonymous author of the Couronnement de Renart. The poet, who lived at the court of Gui de Namur, warns the marquis to be on his guard lest he, the Lion of Flanders, and his whole court fall victims of the artful Jacobins and the deceitful Renart. Apparently personal reasons were behind the writing of that satire.²

The note of personal grievance is not as apparent with the author of Renart le Nouvel as with his contemporary satirists. But Gielée's plea against abuses is no less impassioned. The Lillois poet was gravely concerned about dangers which he saw threatening the throne, the church at large, and the local church. Like Benoît de Sainte-More, Jacquemart Gielée believed that one should state freely his opinions: "Ki le bien set, dire le doit."

The descriptive passages in Renart le Nouvel concerning wars on land and sea (Gielée is adept in the genre héroïque) seem to indicate that the poet was directing attention to the feudal struggles which since the time of Philip Augustus had devastated his native Flanders. Jacquemart Gielée's sympathies were with the rising Flemish bourgeoisie. He also sided with the king against the warring feudal lords; like Jean de Meun he was a supporter of Philip the Fair. It is apparently this king who is represented in the person of Noble, the lion, in the poem.³ One should bear in mind that Gielée was writing prior to the struggle which was waged between Philip the Fair and Gui, Count of Flanders.

In the main body of the poem Gielée makes a broad attack on the Church. The Church is the ship of Renart which is bound on an evil course. The crew is the whole ecclesiastical hierarchy: the Pope is the admiral; the mariners are the cardinals, bishops, priests, abbots, Franciscans and Jacobins. All, great and small, are caught in Renart's snares. Popes and cardinals have

forgotten the true significance of their red hats, symbols of the martyrdom of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. "Alas, Clergy," laments Gielée, "what will you answer on the Day of Judgment?" Gielée's denunciation of the popes and cardinals as "ravenous wolves" calls to mind Dante's phrase censuring the churchmen: "in vesta di pastor lupi rapaci."⁴ From Italy, too, came an attack on the worldliness of the Church by two great contemporaries of Gielée, Dante and Marsiglio of Padua.

Jules Houdoy advances the hypothesis that Gielée originally terminated Renart le Nouvel at verse 7337, after Noble, representing the good forces, goes over to the side of Renart, the incarnation of evil.⁵ At this point in the poem the poet very likely inscribed his name, nationality, and the date of the poem's completion (1288). A few years after 1288, however, significant happenings in the religious and political world so attracted Gielée's interest that he added 711 extra verses to his poem to play up those events. The facts concerning authorship, nationality, and date Gielée now transferred to the end of the newly-added narrative passage. A linguistic study which I have made of the four scribal versions of the poem confirms these assumptions. The manuscript relations and linguistic material (of the above-mentioned addenda, in particular) present convincing evidence that successive editions (états du texte) of Renart le Nouvel came from the pen of Jacquemart Gielée.⁶

The poet, as Houdoy points out, seems to have been prompted by dramatic instinct when, in the last (newly-added) chapters, he has caused all principal characters of the narrative, except Renart and his sons, to recede into the background. Gielée from this point on narrows the range of his attack to center it on the Mendicant Friars and the military orders.

Gielée was harping on the familiar note of his contemporary satirists when he voiced his protest against the political activities of the Preaching Friars (Dominicans) and the Friars Minor (Franciscans). Sometime after 1231 the Mendicant Orders had obtained, with papal backing, several chairs on the theological faculty of the University of Paris.⁷ By penetrating into the life of the university, the Mendicants encountered the jealous opposition of the secular, or parish, clergy. In the disputes that arose over doctrinal matters, the eloquent Guillaume de Saint-Amour, Canon of Beauvais, championed the cause of the secular masters against the pretensions of the Mendicant Friars. It will be recalled that Rutebeuf, in some of his poems, registered sympathetic support of Saint-Amour, the leading spirit of the secular scholars.

Events in Paris bore out the timeliness of Gielée's animal satire. The emotional intensity of the controversies between the secular theologians and the Mendicants resulted in agitations and petty persecutions in the Latin Quarter. Pope Martin IV was regarded by the seculars as another Alexander

IV when, in 1281, he issued a Bull conferring on the Mendicants privileges generally recognized as detrimental to the priests and parish clergy.⁸ The bitterness of the seculars was all the more increased by a defiant, authoritarian attitude assumed by the Pope's legates. The secular clergy violently opposed the right granted to the Mendicant Friars to hear confessions and direct consciences. Jacquemart Gielée refers to this as the privilege "d'engoindre penance as gens, et d'estre ausi as testamens." For the secular clergy the granting of such a privilege to the Friars meant diminishing revenues as well as a blow to their own prestige. For favors granted, Dominicans and Franciscans collected pontifical taxes and preached the crusade against the Hohenstaufen.

Jacquemart Gielée affirms that at the Council of Reims the granting of privileges to the Mendicants was stoutly opposed by the Bishops of Arras and Amiens, as well as by the Bishop of Tournai, Michel de Warengien, a native of Lille. Furthermore, like Dante, Gielée deplored the fact that the papacy had become so preoccupied with ecclesiastical disputes that the cause of the Crusaders had been neglected.⁹ What a pity, reasoned Gielée, that St. John of Acre, a stronghold of the Christians since the time of Philip Augustus, was allowed to fall to the Saracens / May, 1291 /, as a result of which the Christians lost all foothold in the Holy Land! Says Gielée:

Par ce plait fu ele perdue,
Et mains prudom à la mort mis.

In his edition of the Couronnement de Renart, Alfred Foulet remarks: "Les oeuvres qui s'attaquent aux Ordres Mendiants ... font d'habitude dominer l'un / des griefs /, trahissant ainsi les desseins ou les passions de leurs auteurs."¹⁰ Does this remark apply to Jacquemart Gielée when we bring the Mendicant dispute down to the local level? At this period in Lille's civic affairs strained relations existed between town and gown. Many a Lillois citizen was disturbed over the political activities of the Mendicants. On the initiative of the prévôt of the Collegiate Church of Saint-Pierre, the Dominican Friars had been brought to Lille and established on the outskirts of the city.¹¹ The inhabitants of Lille, who had quarreled with the Saint-Pierre clergy over prerogatives, viewed with considerable displeasure the arrival of the Mendicant Friars. Moreover, those citizens showed their antagonism to papal policies in foreign political affairs. When popular opposition was expressed to the Crusade of Aragon--preached as a holy cause by the clergy at the Church of Saint-Etienne--the Pope's legate, Jehan, Cardinal of St. Cecilia, in 1285 exacted from the citizens of Lille a heavy fine.¹² It appears quite evident, therefore, that Gielée shared some of the animosity of the Lillois people towards the local Preaching Friars.

At the poem's end Gielée skillfully displays his powers as a satirist. How better show the evils to which the religious and knightly orders had

fallen a prey than by making Renart their undisputed master? The Mendicant Orders clamor for Renart's leadership. Cleverly Renart appoints one of his sons as director of the Dominican Order and the other the ruler of the Franciscans. The poet likewise deftly solves the wrangling between the Templars and the Hospitalers. Each knightly order seeks the honor of having Renart join its ranks. Renart readily complies by arranging a merger of those two institutions. The sanctimonious goupil puts on a divided, two-colored robe, one side of which represents the Templars and the other the Order of Saint John of Jerusalem. Thus the reign of Renart over Christendom is consummated. The religious satire terminates with Renart's apotheosis: robed and enthroned on top of the Wheel of Fortune, Renart, the Spirit of Evil, rules triumphantly over the world.

In short, one hears in Renart le Nouvel a clear echo of those issues, religious and political, which were aired in the ecclesiastical councils and discussed by the rising bourgeoisie in the poet's city of Lille. In a work which is replete with allegorical and moralizing passages, but redeemed by striking literary qualities and much effective satire, Gielée sought to awaken the Church to the presence of those forces which he felt would bring to it disunity and corruption.

NOTES

1. Edward B. Ham, in his "Rutebeuf and the Tunis Crusade," Romance Philology, IX, 2 (Nov., 1955), gives a final analysis of research on the much-debated poem Renart le Bestoréné. Professor Ham weighs all arguments and sifts the evidence, concluding that the poem does not present an attack on the Mendicant Orders.
2. Alfred Foulet, Le Couronnement de Renard, Elliott Monographs, 24 (Princeton University Press, 1929), pp. lix-lxi.
3. Jules Houdoy, Renart-le-Nouvel, Roman satirique, composé au XIII^e siècle par Jacquemars Gielée de Lille, précédé d'une introduction historique (Lille: impr. L. Danel, 1874), pp. 31, 32.
4. Dante, Paradiso, XXVII, 55-57.
5. Houdoy, pp. 193-194. Houdoy derives his conclusions mainly from an examination of the narrative material in the poem rather than from technical manuscript considerations. Houdoy's views are accepted today.
6. See my article "Renart le Nouvel--Date and Successive Editions,"

- Speculum, XI (1936), pp. 472-477.
7. Ch. -V. Langlois, Histoire de France illustrée, ed. E. Lavissee (Paris, 1911), III, 2^e partie, p. 382. Hastings Rashdall, in his Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages, ed. Powicke and Emden (London, 1936), I, p. 382, note 2, points out that, by 1254, seven chairs were "possessed by six religious orders: Cistercian, Premonstatensian, Austin Canons, Trinitarian, Franciscan, Dominican, and it is not clear that each order had a chair." The popularity of the Friars as teachers is undisputed. It is natural that Gielée, when speaking of the Mendicants, should refer only to the Dominicans and Franciscans, the most prominent of the regulars.
 8. Langlois, p. 384.
 9. Renart le Nouvel, vv. 7581-83; Paradiso, IX, 126.
 10. Foulet, p. lvii.
 11. Houdoy, p. 38.
 12. Ibid., p. 37.

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RECENT BOOKS IN THE FIELD OF
ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

R. Barbeau. Un prophète luciférien, Léon Bloy. Paris, Aubier, 1957. Pp. 287.

This learned and at once shocking analysis of an eminent Catholic author is a source for abundant controversy. Regardless of whether Barbeau's definition of Bloy as "Luciferian" is correct, his thesis nevertheless reveals one strong tendency in Bloy.

Charles Baudelaire. Baudelaire: a Self-Portrait. Selected letters translated and edited with a running commentary by Lois Hyslop and Francis E. Hyslop, Jr., New York, Oxford University Press, 1957. Pp. vii, 259.

Some hundred selected letters of Baudelaire present a richly human document of the artist's life. The Hyslops' commentary is perceptive and penetrating, and the reader is constantly tempted to turn to the great Crépét-Pichois edition of the Oeuvres complètes for more letters.

Geneviève Delassault. Le Maistre de Sacy et son temps. Paris, Librairie Nizet, 1957. Pp. 306.

This study of a minor Jansenist reveals many facets of the movement that we might miss in a major personality. Delassault has covered the Jansenist literature carefully and, in addition, used many unpublished sources.

Carlo François. L'Esthétique d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry. Cambridge, Mass., Schoenhof's, 1957. Pp. 210.

This fully documented study of the great aviator's aesthetics is comprehensive and thoughtful. At the same time François is able to interpret, through Saint-Exupéry, some of the finest traits of French character.

Alfred Glauser. Hugo et la poésie pure. Geneva, Droz, 1957. Pp. 132.

Glauser provides many significant commentaries on Hugo's poetry but does not fall victim to over-enthusiasm for it. He gives illuminating explanations of some of Hugo's unusual poetic diction.

Helmut Hatzfeld. Trends and Styles in Twentieth Century French Literature. Washington, D. C., Catholic University of America Press, 1957. Pp. 262.

This broad survey of contemporary French literature offers much insight into trends and groupings that are frequently very confusing. Professor Hatzfeld's judgments are not final, but they offer many points of departure for other students of twentieth century French letters.

Lucie Horner. Baudelaire critique de Delacroix. Geneva, Droz, 1956. Pp. x, 200.

Meticulously written but pedestrian in thought, Horner's work contributes some new ideas on Baudelaire's interpretation of Delacroix.

Herbert J. Hunt. Honoré de Balzac. London, Athlone Press, 1957. Pp. 198.

This most recent biography of Balzac represents a careful selection from the vast body of information that has been accumulated on Balzac. Hunt is concise in style, shrewd in judgment, and brilliant in critical analyses.

Shelby T. McCloy. The Humanitarian Movement in Eighteenth Century France. Lexington, University of Kentucky Press, 1957. Pp. 274.

One of the basic elements in the western mind of the twentieth century is humanitarianism. McCloy explores in detail the backgrounds of this attitude in a fully documented study.

J. H. Mathews. Les deux Zola: science et personnalité dans l'expression. Geneva, Droz, 1957. Pp. 100.

The effect of Zola's personality on his style is brought out in a satisfying and illuminating manner. Mathews shows clearly how Zola's style is a hodge-podge of the scientific and the personal.

André Maurois. Les trois Dumas. Paris, Hachette, 1957. Pp. 499.

The great revolutionary General Dumas appears in this book as the first of a noted family, most famous for his son and grandson, Alexandre Dumas père and fils. Maurois has given us a vivid and accurate portrait of one of the great French families of the nineteenth century-- great in the sense of three dramatic and creative lives.

Robert J. Niess. Julien Benda. Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1956. Pp. x, 361.

Benda's extensive and varying literary and critical production is analyzed in detail. Niess gives thorough attention to Benda the man of letters as well as to Benda the politician.

Jean Orcibal. Port-Royal entre le miracle et l'obéissance: Flavie Passart et Angélique de St.-Jean Arnauld d'Andilly. Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 1957. Pp. 197.

This penetrating study of Port-Royal wins more laurels for Orcibal as a student of Jansenism. His analyses of Flavie and Angélique carry us to the very heart of Jansenism. Many of Orcibal's sources are unpublished manuscripts in the great libraries and archives.

Marcel Pollitzer. Jules Renard, sa vie, son vœu. Paris, La Colombe, 1956. Pp. 251.

Based largely on the Journal and the Correspondance, Pollitzer's brings to light many hidden facets of Renard's life and creative thought.

John C. Prevost. Le dandyisme en France (1817-1839). Geneva, Droz, 1957. Pp. 215.

Carefully documented and buttressed with abundant pertinent quotations, this work traces the emigration of the dandy from England to France and his penetration into the literature of the age. Such writers as Stendhal, Merimée, Balzac, Musset, and Gautier are discussed.

Leon S. Roudiez. Maurras jusqu'à l'Action Française. Paris, André Bonne, 1957. Pp. 352.

Cautious, objective and carefully written, this book is based on a 1949 Columbia doctoral dissertation. It is at once a critical biography of Maurras and an analysis of this political milieu.

Pierre Schneider. Jules Renard par lui-même. Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1956. Pp. 192.

Schneider's work is a careful psychological analysis of Renard and his "vespasianism." It is richly and carefully illustrated.

Enid Starkie. Baudelaire. London, Faber and Faber, 1957. Pp. 622.

This is a completely revised version of Enid Starkie's biography published a quarter of a century ago. It reflects a mature, satisfying scholarship, and it will surely take a leading position among Baudelaire's biographies in any language.

Walter A. Strauss. Proust and Literature. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1957. Pp. viii, 263.

Strauss analyzes carefully Proust's critical judgments on French and foreign literature. He is cautious and discerning, although there is little wit or brilliance to lighten the occasionally heavy style.

Katherine E. Wheatley. Racine and English Classicism. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1956. Pp. x, 345.

The author performs two valuable services: She penetrates to the heart of Racine's dramatic technique, and she brings out clearly Racine's influence in England from 1674 to 1714. Here is a major contribution to comparative literature.

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